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The constitution of the visible church of Christ





CONSTITUTION

OF THE

VISIBLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Considered,

UNDER THE HEADS OF
AUTHORITY AND INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE; CREEDS (TRADITION);
ARTICLES OF RELIGION; HERESY AND SCHISM;

STATE-ALLIANCE,

PREACHING, AND NATIONAL EDUCATION:

In Eight Discourses,

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE IN THE YEAR 1838, AT THE LECTURE FOUNDED BY THE REV. JOHN HULSE.

REV. RICHARD PARKINSON, B. D.

OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE,
AND FELLOW OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE, IN MANCHESTER.

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MDCCCXXXIX.

HULSEAN LECTURES

FOR

MDCCCXXXVIII.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH OF CHRIST CONSIDERED.



"Clause from the Will of the Rev. John Hulse, late of Elworth, in the county of Chester, Clerk, deceased, dated the 21st day of July, in the year of our Lord, 1777, expressed in the words of the testator, as he, in order to prevent mistakes, thought proper to draw and write the same himself, and directed that such clause should be every year printed, to the intent that the several persons whom it might concern and be of service to might know that there were such special donations and endowments left for the encouragement of piety and learning, in an age unfortunately addicted to infidelity and luxury, and that others might be invited to the like charitable, and as he humbly hoped, seasonable and useful benefactions."

LECTURER.

"I direct that four parts out of six (of his property in Clive) shall be paid on St. John the Evangelist's day following the preaching the lectures or sermons after-mentioned annually, to such learned and ingenious clergyman in the said university of the degree of Master of Arts, and under the age of 40 years, as shall be duly chosen or elected on Christmas-day, or within seven days after, by the Vice-Chancellor then for the time being, and by the Master or Head of Trinity College, and the Master of St. John's College, or by any two of them, in order to preach twenty sermons in the whole year, (i. e.) ten sermons in the following spring in St. Mary's great church in Cambridge, namely, one sermon on the Friday morning, or else on Sunday afternoon, in every week during the months of April and May, and

the two first weeks in June, and likewise ten sermons in the same church in the following autumn, either on the Friday morning or else on the Sunday afternoon in every week during the months of September and October, and during the two first weeks in November. The subject of which discourses shall be as followeth—that is, the subject of five sermons in the spring, and of five sermons in the autumn shall be to shew the evidence for revealed religion, and to demonstrate in the most convincing and persuasive manner the truth and excellence of Christianity, so as to include not only the prophecies and miracles general and particular, but also any other proper or useful arguments, whether the same be direct or collateral proofs of the Christian religion, which he may think fittest to discourse upon, either in general or particular, especially the collateral arguments or else any particular argument or branch thereof, and chiefly against notorious Infidels, whether Atheists or Deists, not descending to any particular sects or controversies (so much to be lamented) among Christians themselves, except some new or dangerous error either of superstition or enthusiasm, as of Popery or Methodism, or the like, either in opinion or practice, should prevail, in which cause only it may be necessary for that time to preach against the same. Nevertheless the preacher of the ten sermons last mentioned, to shew the truth and excellence of revealed religion and the evidence of Christianity, may at his own discretion preach either more or fewer than ten sermons on this great argument, only provided he shall in consequence thereof lessen or increase the number of the other ten remaining sermons which are hereinafter directed to be on the more obscure parts of Holy Scripture in a due proportion, so as that he shall every year preach twenty sermons on those subjects on the whole.

And as to the ten sermons that remain, of which five were to be preached in the spring and five in the autumn, as before mentioned, the Lecturer or Preacher shall take for his subject some of the more difficult texts or obscure parts of the Holy Scriptures, such as might appear to be more generally useful

and necessary to be explained, and which might best admit of such a comment and explanation without presuming to pry too far into the profound secrets and awful mysteries of the Almighty; and in all the said twenty sermons such practical observations shall be made, and such useful conclusions added, as may instruct and edify mankind. The said twenty sermons shall be every year printed, and a new preacher every year elected, (except in the case of the extraordinary merit of the preacher), when it may be sometimes thought proper to continue the same person for five, or at the most six years together; but for no longer period, nor shall he ever afterwards be elected to the same duty."

Substance of the order of the Court of Chancery in the matter of the Hulsean Lectureship, in the university of Cambridge, dated 21st December, 1830:—

On the Petition of the Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars of the university of Cambridge.

After reciting the property left by Mr. Hulse for the endowment of a Lectureship in Cambridge, and the conditions attached to the office, the petition states that owing to the number of lectures required to be delivered and printed by the Lecturer within the year, no sufficiently qualified person could be induced to hold the office, and suggests that the number might be conveniently reduced to eight, which was the number appointed by Mr. Boyle, or to any other which the Chancellor might "Wherenpon," to use the words of the order, "all parties concerned were ordered to attend his lordship on the matter of the said petition; and counsel for the petitioners this day attending accordingly, upon hearing of the said petition, and of the said Will of the said John Hulse, dated the 21st day of July, 1777, read, and what was alleged by the counsel of the petitioners, this court doth order that the number of the lectures in the petition mentioned be reduced to eight; and it is ordered that the time limited for printing the said lectures be enlarged for the term of one year from the delivery of the last of such lectures." And he directed that such clause should always be concluded with the following prayer:

"May the Divine blessing for ever go along with all my benefactions; and may the greatest and best of Beings, by his all-wise Providence and gracious influence, make the same effectual to his own glory and the good of my fellow-creatures! Amen."



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PREFACE.

In the Introductory Lecture, the author has explained, at some length and with all the clearness in his power, his own views with regard to the present position of the Church of Christ—the causes which have led to that position—and the remedies which might be proposed for some of the evils which attend it. The considerable interval which has elapsed since the composition of that Lecture, while, from the excitement which now exists on all great questions of Theology, it has daily thrown some additional light on that position, has not tended to alter the author's views regarding it, but rather to confirm them by the concurrent testimony of almost every successive writer on these questions. It is now evident to all, that the external Consti-

tution of the Church of Christ had received from the Clergy, (and especially during the last quarter of a century) much less attention than its essential importance demanded. The exigency of the times had a tendency to lead men to neglect every thing in the study of Theology which was not evidently indispensable; and a school had gradually sprung up in the Church, which held that system was of little consequence compared with personal sincerity and zeal. Every man can be assured that he possesses the latter: the former is of difficult attainment: and thus it came to pass that each minister took that view of the Gospel which was suggested to him by the accidental impressions of his early years, or the bent of his natural disposition and turn of mind. As might have been expected, the theology which thus originated, soon developed itself under two tolerably distinct aspects—what may be called sentimental and common-sense divinity. The imaginative adopted the one, the argumentative teacher the other system; each taking the direction of his own mind to be the true guide to scriptural interpretation, and both being alike profoundly ignorant, if they did not entertain a profound contempt, of

the historical monuments of the Church, and that unity of spirit, which has all along in so remarkable a degree pervaded the Church Catholic, not only in its Christian practice, but its views of scripture doctrine. These erroneous notions (we have reason to thank the great Head of the Church for so inestimable a blessing!) are now fast disappearing: but the mixture of surprise, and of ignorant hostility, with which a return from them in some quarters has been received in others, affords a melancholy proof to those who had been educated in an elder and better school, how deeply these notions had fixed themselves in the minds of many of their younger brethren, and, it may be added, how necessary are occasional controversies (evils though they be) in the Church of Christ, in order that, errors which may have been silently and insidiously disseminating themselves in the Church may be discovered and extirpated. Well is it said by the Apostle—"There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."* It has been the author's object to contribute his portion (however humble) towards

^{*} I. Cor. xi. 19.

the consummation of an end so desirable, in the line of argument which he has adopted in the following Lectures. Having formed his own opinions on grounds and evidence altogether independent of any passing controversies, his testimony on the questions here discussed may be considered (quantum valeat) as that of a neutral spectator; and he has only entered into those points so far as it was absolutely necessary to complete the systematic view of the Church which he had proposed to himself in these Lectures. It may be added, that he had an especial eye to the Student in divinity, not only in the composition of these Discourses, but also in the notes with which they are illustrated. He uses the term illustrated, because the reader will at once perceive, that they have been for the most part chosen, not as proofs of the truth of the propositions maintained in the text, but as enforcing some collateral points, closely connected with and springing out of the subjects under discussion, and which are, at the same time, in themselves of the utmost interest and importance. The form of Lectures, to which the author was restricted, and the unity of design, and balanced harmony of parts,

which are essential to such a species of composition, precluded the occasional enlargement on some topics, which yet deserved more ample discussion than could well be afforded them in the text. Such points the author was driven to treat in the form of notes; and these notes he wished to couch, as much as possible, in other language than his own: for an argument, conveyed in the words of a Father of the Church, has double weight-its own intrinsic worth, and the testimony of him by whom it is urged. With this view, also, the evidence of such Fathers has been preferred as seem to have been imbued with the least of a party, and the most of a true Catholic spirit; and the eloquence of whose language elevates and awakens the imagination while it irresistibly convinces the judgment. Such men as Taylor, and Hooker, and Mede, cannot be studied, even by the casual and careless reader, without a mingled feeling of conviction and admiration. Other controversialists may arrive at the haven of truth by a straight and even course; but men like these, not only steer right onward, through the storm and turmoil with which they are surrounded, but throw off a phosphoric light from their sides, which illumines the whole perturbed surface of the vexed ocean around them.

The author has ventured to append to these Lectures a Visitation Sermon, which he preached and published in the year 1832, on the subject of "Liturgical Preaching." He has done so from a feeling that his view of the external Constitution of the Church would not be complete without some remarks as to the proper mode of *enforcing* its principles on the reception of the people; and as this Sermon has had the good fortune to meet with the approbation of a critic,* to whose qualification for pronouncing a judgment on such questions the University of Cambridge, (unless the author is much mistaken as to the writer of that critique), has lately borne a remarkable and unanimous testimony,—he has not hesitated to reprint it, as expressing the views which he still entertains with regard to the most momentous duty of "preaching the Gospel." It enables him, also, to bear a willing and grateful testimony to the improvement which has, in this respect, taken place within the last very few years. It is by bringing distant points of time into imme-

^{*} Quarterly Review, No. 117, Art. "Village Preaching."

diate juxtaposition, that the altered aspect of things in the interval can be most distinctly ascertained. In the year 1832, the author introduced the sermon in question to the public with the following remarks: "The question has long presented itself to his mind, as a topic which has scarcely yet assumed due prominence, or received sufficient consideration among us; and it would be a source of great satisfaction to him, if this attempt to bring it more distinctly before the public notice should lead some individual of weight and authority in the Church to enter more formally and minutely into its principle and details. These are not times in which our Establishment should neglect any means of strengthening her arms, and combining her forces; and it does certainly appear, that one most obvious and sure method of doing so, is by instituting some bond of unity among her Ministers, by which, wide as is the field of their labours, they may simultaneously be conducing to the furtherance of the same good end. This bond of unity, rightly used, is the Liturgy of our Church. It has, so far, silently done its work, of giving some degree of harmony to the most discordant elements; let us, now,

labour along with it from principle, and on system. Here is a Reform, which is strictly within the province, because solely within the power, of the Clergy: to this point, then, let our serious attention be at once directed; and let him alone be considered a faithful Minister of our Church, whose study it is to PREACH THE BIBLE IN THE TONE OF THE PRAYER-BOOK." It must be evident to the reader, that this language, though but comparatively of yesterday, is now that of a day gone by; and what was then received, as the author recollects, in some not uninfluential quarters, as maintaining a somewhat startling and equivocal position, would now be considered as describing not only the just principles, but the constant practice, of the great majority of the Clergy of the Church. These are among the cheering signs of the times.

It now only remains that the author should tender his grateful thanks to those gentlemen who have entrusted to him the high and responsible office of Hulsean Lecturer for a second year; to the Worshipful the Vice-Chancellor of the University; and to Dr. Wordsworth, the learned Master of Trinity College, to whom, among other, and perhaps even higher benefits, the Church is indebted for some most judicious and well-timed publications. There is yet another name, which the author would have been proud to unite with the preceding, as one whom he would have been delighted to honour, and who would have received this testimony of respect, and the volume to which it is prefixed, with that consideration for the author, and toleration for his defects, which were characteristic of the amenity of his nature;—the late Very Rev. Dr. Wood, Master of St. John's College, and Dean of Ely. Since these Lectures were delivered, death has removed him beyond the language of gratitude. To him the Hulsean Lecturer, not only of present but of future times, is deeply indebted. He was a Trustee under Mr. Hulse's Will during many years; and it was by his unremitting and judicious exertions that the bequests of that great benefactor to the University were brought, through many difficulties, into beneficial operation. To him the Author of the present volume lies under especial obligations. It was at his unexpected suggestion that he was induced to seek an office, for which

nothing but encouragement and approbation from such a quarter could ever have convinced him that he possessed any due qualifications; and it was from him that the information was derived respecting the history of Mr. Hulse, from which the author's late volume of Lectures will hereafter derive its principal value. Like Mr. Hulse himself,—though in a more extended degree, for it was throughout his life as well as in death,-Dr. Wood was an eminent benefactor to his college: and some account of his character may most appropriately accompany this volume into the world, as a just tribute not only of gratitude, but of justice. Under these circumstances, the author gladly avails himself of the permission to annex a memoir of him which has lately appeared, from the pen of one who knew him well, and who had neither motive nor disposition, even had their been any necessity, to sacrifice truth to flattery. Those who were best acquainted with the late Master of St. John's will be the readiest to acknowledge the justice of the following sketch of his character; and the author has great pleasure in transferring it from the ephemeral columns of a newspaper, into a publication

where, (even for its own sake), it may reasonably expect a more permanent existence:

The death of this distinguished member of the university of Cambridge, and dignitary of the Church of England, took place on the 23d of April, (1839.) His remains were interred in the College Chapel, May 1, with every possible mark of respect, being attended to the grave by the Vice-Chancellor, many Masters of Colleges, Professors, and other members of the university, and by all the resident members of his own college, together with many others, who went from a distance.

The history of such a man deserves consideration on many accounts: it reflects honour not only on himself and on the individuals who gave him assistance and encouragement in his youth, but also on the institutions of this country, which, not by any capricious and sudden favour of what is called *fortune*, but as the regular and natural consequence of his merit, made open for him the way to dignity and wealth; so that, rising from the most humble condition of life, he became, both in accomplishments and station, a fit associate for the most noble in birth and rank. Moreover, the success which rewarded his merit, offers encouragement to all who are placed in similar circumstances

He was born December 14, 1760, in a remote part of the parish of Bury, Lancashire—a district which is now inhabited by many well-educated and intelligent people, but at that time was in a less favourable state, and little likely to produce a man of so refined a charac-

ter. His father was in very humble circumstances, but he was much esteemed for his simple honesty; and having (for a man in his station of life) considerable knowledge, he instructed his son himself in arithmetic and algebra.—The mother also was a very worthy, affectionate woman. Her maiden name was Smith: she had six brothers, some of whom and their descendants have given proofs of great mechanical ingenuity. Both parents lived a considerable time after their son took his degree, so that they knew of his rising distinction in the University, and had the gratification of seeing the good fruits of the care which they had taken in his education.

He received his classical instruction in the grammarschool at Bury, of which the Rev. Francis Hodgson was at that time head master,-a man highly esteemed, to whom during his life, and to his family, Dr. Wood continued to give strong proofs of his gratitude and affection. The founder of the school, the Rev. Roger Kay, having been educated at St. John's, Cambridge, bequeathed to the school exhibitions for those who might go to that college; to which circumstance, no doubt, St. John's is indebted for the good fortune of having Dr. Wood's name placed on its boards. He went up a freshman in 1778, and, having remained in college during all the vacations, did not return home till the summer of 1782. In the mean time he had obtained the high honour of being senior wrangler, and a fellowship. He was appointed one of the assistant tutors at the earliest opportunity, and he continued to be engaged in the tuition till the latter end of the year 1814. In the following year, on the death of Doctor Craven, he was elected master; and in 1820, he was appointed to the deanery of Ely, by Lord Liverpool. During the long period of sixty years, he passed the chief part of his time in college. And, it may be confidently affirmed that, during at least half of that time, no one possessed so much influence in the University as he did. This was owing partly to his position at the head of a large and united college, and partly to his personal character, which, having first placed him in that position, continued to exert its proper influence.

He possessed, in a very high degree, qualities which could not fail to command esteem. He was a man of great natural ability, of which his academic honour was an early proof. He published three mathematical treatises, which, for thirty or forty years, have been in common use in the University. They are remarkable for perspicuity and elegance, and retained their place in the University system of education longer perhaps than any similar treatises-written, as they are, on subjects which, from their nature, admit of progressive improvement. His sound and cautious understanding, seconded by unremitting diligence, by remarkable punctuality, and rigid adherence to order in all his arrangements, particularly qualified him for the able discharge of the practical duties of life. Being seconded also by a firm and equable temper, and by never-failing courtesy of manners, it qualified him in the same high degree for government:-his authority being always uniformly and temperately exercised, so that there was no need of abrupt transitions from excessive indulgence to severity.

His judgment was most excellent, both as to matters of speculation, and practical measures in the common business of life. To the same correct judgment we must refer the exact propriety of his demeanour towards superiors, equals, and dependants, and the regard which he paid to outward decorum; even in matters comparatively trifling and minute, such as dress, equipage, and style of living, he always observed a propriety suitable to his station, equally removed from mean parsimony and extravagant display.

We must add to the above, moral qualities of the highest order and value,—purity of conversation and conduct, integrity, benevolence, humility. Never was he known, in his freest moments, to make the least unbecoming allusion, or do otherwise than discountenance the like in others; still less, if possible, was he ever known to violate moral purity in his conduct.

To mention his integrity would scarcely be necessary, were it not that it was in him of so strict a character. While he was firm in maintaining his own rights, he was equitable and liberal in respecting those of others. In transacting business with him, there was no need to guard against trickery, subterfuges, or evasive interpretations. In the exercise of authority, he paid great deference to established rules and precedents. Hence all who were subject to him lived in perfect security, not afraid of any fanciful and arbitrary innovations. They knew what they

had to rely upon, and were fully assured that they had no wrong to apprehend under so mild and equitable a ruler.

Benevolence, in a very high degree, was another of his qualities. His natural disposition was exceedingly affectionate. He was strongly attached to his near relatives, to numerous friends, and to his native county. No caprice or groundless suspicion ever interfered to disturb his friendships: those which he had once formed, were continued, with scarcely any exception, till they were terminated by death. As he was not of a sanguine temperament, or a lively imagination, this quality of benevolence, in the high degree in which he possessed it, was probably little perceived by those who had only an ordinary acquaintance with him. But his intimate friends will not hesitate to bear testimony that he had great kindness of heart, which was not restrained, but withdrawn from common notice, by his calm and cautious reserve of manner .-His charitable donations were to a very large amount. His whole desire seemed to be, to be doing good. During the last months of his life, when he was in very indifferent health, his thoughts were constantly occupied in devising acts of kindness to his friends, or plans for the public improvement. In the interchange of friendly services, he was almost too scrupulous in his anxiety that the balance should not remain in his own favour; and the instances were very few, if any, in which he did not so manage matters as to place it on the other side. When any little service was rendered to him, he was apt to magnify it, and keep it in mind as what it would be a dereliction of duty if he failed to repay. If his discernment as to the character of individuals ever erred, it was owing to his being always inclined, through the kindness of his affections, to form too favourable an estimate.—To all who had intercourse with him, his attention was respectful and unremitting, yet far removed from insincere professions or adulation. It must have been a rare excellence of natural disposition, aided by a long course of self-discipline, which gave him such serenity of temper, and such invariable readiness in consulting the comfort and paying respect to the feelings of others. Seldom was he heard to utter an angry expression, or give a rebuke to any person whatever; and yet few have ever lived whose authority was so readily obeyed.

He was of a most humble, unpretending spirit. Prosperity never elated him beyond measure, nor did increase of power cause any alteration in his temper or manner. He had a happy facility in repressing undue familiarity, not by morose severity, but by his calmness, self-possession, and the real dignity of his character.

In conversation, he carefully abstained from censorious and disparaging remarks; nor did he ever seem desirous to mortify and depress others, with the view of making them sensible of his own superiority. If he ever expressed an unfavourable opinion of an individual, it was of him as acting in some public capacity, and then with such moderation and good temper, as to make it manifest that his disapprobation was not embittered by personal ill-will.

As he took a very decided part in religion and politics, and especially in the affairs of the University to which he belonged, it would be too much to expect that he had no enemies. Let us hope that their hostility, if any existed, has been buried along with him. Of this they may be assured, that there was no return of it on his part, with any mixture of malice and resentment. He gave many proofs of a forgiving disposition. If, in the course of his long life, and the multiplicity of affairs in which he was engaged, he ever did injury to any, let them be willing to believe that it was owing to some inadvertence, (however rare in him,) or to a mistaken sense of duty; and consider also how difficult it is, amidst many conflicting claims and interests, for the most accurate judgment to discern invariably the exact line of rectitude, and pursue it without deviation, never warped by any partial affection.

When we see such an example of excellence, we are naturally led to inquire into the peculiar causes of it, with a due and grateful acknowledgment of the primary Source of all good. Undoubtedly his natural disposition was very favourable; he had been also carefully brought up by honest Christian parents and teachers; and, above all, as his firm foundation and constant guide, he had a stedfast belief in the truth of the Holy Scriptures. Though he never introduced the subject of religion into common conversation, yet those who were intimate with him could not fail to discover, from undersigned indications and casual remarks, that his religious faith was truly sincere and unwavering. Hence, relying upon the Bible, as the sole ground of his hopes, and as the guide of his life, he seemed to live under an habitual consciousness of obligation, and to be impressed with a practical conviction of being accountable; and his constant study and desire seemed to be, to do his duty towards God and man.

He was firmly attached to the Established Church of England, highly approving of its scriptural doctrines, decent ceremonial, and moderate discipline, both as distinguished from bigotry, and from enthusiasm, laxity, and indifference. With all his moderation and forbearance, he was entirely free from that spurious and worthless candour which leads men to speak with equal favour of all individuals, sects, and parties. He was punctual in attending the outward services of religion, both of public and private worship. During his last illness, which continued with greater or less severity through half a year, he never uttered the least expression of impatience: his fortitude and cheerfulness remained unshaken, and his faculties almost unimpaired to the end of his life. He frequently intimated his entire resignation to the Divine will.

In reviewing the labours of his exemplary life, the incalculable services which he rendered to his own college in particular, cannot pass unnoticed. Having devoted to it the chief part of his care for sixty years, and made the most strenuous exertions, by his instruction, example, and authority, to promote its welfare, he gave further proof of his attachment by munificent liberality, partly bestowed in his life-time, and partly (in the final disposition of his property) providing for its permanent benefit. It was impossible for the members of it to regard him, while he lived, otherwise than with the most grateful affection and reverence; and these are the feelings with which his memory will long be cherished by them. And certainly,

while they, in common with all his friends, lament their own loss in his departure, they have, with regard to himself, strong grounds of comfort. His earthly course was not terminated till he had arrived at an age beyond which our strength is but labour and sorrow; and they may entertain the consoling hope that the blessings which he experienced here, with much thankfulness to the merciful Author of them, were but a foretaste of eternal and more ample manifestations of the Divine goodness, in the state to which he has been transferred.

If any think that the account above given of this great and good man is extravagant in commendation, let not a strained interpretation be given to it, as if it were meant to represent him as immaculate, or the highest human virtue as being otherwise than imperfect. But, with every proper admission, it will still remain true that, though Dr. Wood was held in very great esteem; and though numerous friends were strongly attached to him, yet, from the reserve and simplicity of his manners, he could not be adequately appreciated, except by those who were very intimately acquainted with him. It was also necessary to know him long; because a remarkable characteristic of his excellence was the continued uniformity of it. Indeed, the apprehension that an accurate description of him must appear partial and overcharged to people in general, has caused a doubt whether any attempt to describe him ought to be made; especially remembering how adverse he himself was to ostentation, and how little his virtuous actions were prompted by the mere love of fame. Nevertheless, on the whole, it seems right that a just tribute

to the memory of the deceased should not be withheld, from a fear that some may be slow in giving credit to it; and therefore this representation, made with a sincere desire of adhering to the truth, is offered as an imperfect memorial of him, in the hope that it may afford some satisfaction to his friends, and perhaps be serviceable in recalling to their thoughts his bright example of piety and virtue.

LECTURE I.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE CHURCH.

THE ARGUMENT.

FOUNDATIONS NOW THE SUBJECT OF CONTROVERSY-DIFFICULTIES OF DEFENCE INCREASED BY THE IGNORANCE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE OF THE ADVERSARY-LIKEWISE BY THE CHURCH'S LONG PEACE, AND RELIANCE ON HER CAUSE-IN ADDITION, DEFECTIVE CLERICAL EDUCA-TION, HASTY DEMAND FOR NEW LABOURERS, AND THE DISTRACTIONS OF ALL-ABSORBING PRACTICAL DUTIES-ATTEMPTS ON THE PART OF THE CHURCH TO SYMBOLIZE WITH DISSENTERS IN THESE DUTIES-FAILURE, AND WIDER DIVISIONS IN CONSEQUENCE—EQUALLY ASSAULTED BY ROMANISTS AND DISSENTERS-CONSOLATIONS IN THE PRESENT POSI-TION OF CONTROVERSY-MORE DECISIVE RESULTS MAY BE EXPECTED FROM DISCUSSING GREAT QUESTIONS-THE TRUTH HAS NOTHING TO FEAR ULTIMATELY-GREAT MISTAKE OF SUPPOSING THAT INDEFINITE TRUTHS ARE THEREFORE INDIFFERENT-PROPOSAL, IN THESE LECTURES, TO PROPOUND THE TRUTH WITH REGARD TO SOME LEADING POINTS, BY SEEKING OUT THE ELEMENTARY IDEA-THESE LEADING POINTS STATED-GOOD RESULTS TO BE HOPED FOR FROM PURSUING THIS LINE OF ARGUMENT.



A GENERAL VIEW OF THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE CHURCH.

Galatians, i. 8, 9.

Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

These are days for "stirring foundations." Men are not contented, now, with hewing off branches from the Tree of Life; they lay the axe to its root. It cannot be denied, that there is a simplicity and a boldness in this proceeding, which are always in favour of the assailant. In former days, there were certain given principles, some common concessions, at least tacitly agreed upon by the combatants, which one party did not hold himself justified in assailing, nor the other deem it necessary to defend. This was holy ground; and both sides took their shoes from off their feet, when they ventured near its precincts. But this inclosure, hitherto so sacred, has, in later times, been broken in upon, and defiled. The discovery having once been made, that it is possible to deny in one hour what it would take a whole century to prove,—an instrument so effectual has never since been neglected; nor have the effects of it been unimportant in securing some apparent and temporary advantages to the enemies of Re-The presumptions hereby become, from the very first, in their favour. The doubter seems to occupy higher ground than his antagonist till his doubts are removed: while the truth may be all along against him, and his very ignorance may be the sole ground of his triumph. Meantime the difficulties of the friend of Revelation are increased by this ignorance or obstinacy of his adversary. The more the one denies, the more the other has to prove; till the struggle comes at last to be one rather to try the skill of the champion than to determine the merits of the contest. How easy is it for any individual to gather together all the objections, while how difficult it is for any individual to compass all the answers!

Besides, the advocate of the truth is never taken at so great a disadvantage as when that is unexpectedly denied of which he has the firmest convictions. His implicit faith in his cause leads to his very betrayal of it. There are certain conclusions sometimes so strongly impressed upon the mind—the evidence for them seems so plain and undeniable—that we deem it no longer necessary to retain

in our recollection the processes by which we have arrived at them; they assume rather the form of axioms than deductions; they are taken for granted by us, in all our reasonings, as undeniable verities, which, having been once established, as we hold, on arguments universally satisfactory, it would be superfluous in us to demonstrate, and useless for our adversary to deny. When, therefore, these truths are denied-and of this we have now no lack of experience—we are surprised into the discovery that the arguments on which they rest, clear and obvious as they once were, have now escaped us. The proposition, indeed, remains, but the demonstration has vanished: and at least a momentary triumph is afforded to error, by a too confiding reliance on the goodness of his cause on the part of the advocate of the truth.

What is thus true of individuals, is true, also, of general churches; and from no cause more than this, has the Church of England "suffered loss" during its later contests with its combined (however personally irreconcileable) foes, of superstition and bigotry on the one hand, and laxity and scepticism on the other. She had possessed so long and so peaceably her vast mass of inherited truths, that she had forgotten the necessity of being able to shew her title to them. This might be perhaps the very best position for a triumphant Church—

the most favourable to personal piety, and internal peace. The tree of the gospel never throws out its branches in such spreading and fruitful luxuriance, as when, healthy within, it is checked by no blights and storms from without. But this is not the natural, nor perhaps, in the long run, the most beneficial condition of the Church of Christ. It is through much tribulation that communities as well as individuals must enter into the kingdom of heaven. Even in the apostolic age, whole churches tottered in their fidelity, and some "left their first love;" and all required "rebuke and chastening," that they might learn to "be zealous and repent."

But when we, like the church in Sardis, were called upon to "be watchful, and to strengthen the things which remain, that were ready to die," we had not, like them, an Apostolic monitor to warn us of the way, as to whether we had turned to the right hand or to the left. Hence for assaults, whether from the right hand or from the left they came, we were equally and almost fatally unprepared. Our spiritual ancestors had done our work so well for us, that we fancied we had nothing left to do for ourselves. We were reposing on their fields of victory, instead of training ourselves, after their example, for a renewal of the contest; when, therefore, the struggle came, "was there a shield or spear

¹ See Revelation, Chap. ii. v. 4,; Chap. iii. v. 2.

seen among forty thousand in Israel?"2 The Dissenter found an argument in our laxity, the Romanist in our ignorance. A race of divines had sprung up, for more reasons than one, (and those abundantly sufficient to remove from them the charge of any special culpability), but little prepared for the emergency in which they found themselves, perhaps somewhat unexpectedly, involved. Our schools of divinity— (it will not now be denied)—however pure in their fountains, had become corrupted in the stream. Our Professors' chairs, indeed, continued to be occupied (as they have, with few exceptions, all along been occupied) with men of profound and accurate erudition, and unwearied industry; but they were but as leaven hid in three measures of meal; and neither the distracting, however important, secular studies of the pupil, nor the urgent circumstances of the time, permitted their disciples to tarry till the whole was leavened. They were thus like the apostolic fishermen while still on the lake of Galilee, well, indeed, and usefully employed, even with a view to their ultimate destination, yet not in a course of direct training to become fishers of men. But they differed from them in this, that they were sent forth to preach the word from city to city, before they had companied with their master as the Apostle's did, if not in his bodily presence, at least in study-

² Judges, v. 8.

ing his word, and weighing and digesting the full purport of his mission.³

There was a reason for this "taking," as it were, "the kingdom of heaven by force," which, however it may be lamented, cannot justly be gainsaid. The fields were already white to harvest while the labourers were few. What seemed most wanting was rather strong and willing hands to gather in the fruits, than skilful and prudent heads to cultivate the ground, and sow the seed. Numbers who were

³ It has long been lamented that the Church of England has no fixed school of Divinity; and to this we may safely attribute the unscientific treatment of Doctrinal points of Theology, which is too often observable, even by men of the greatest ability, and the most strict, yet irregular, training. Her best divines are, at the present day, necessarily, in a great measure, self-taught men: and how many, left to such an instructor, unavoidably go wrong! Some take up popular and ready eloquence as an easy substitute for sound knowledge. Some follow the track of a great name, instead of the decisions of the Church at large; and some venture to strike out a path for themselves, and fancy they are original while they are simply ignorant. Our theological professors, in both our Universities, are beginning to do more towards giving full efficacy to the ends of their respective foundations, than previous circumstances enabled them to do; and it is to be hoped the day is not far distant, when sound knowledge shall be as easily attainable on questions of divinity, as it is already in all the other learned professions. Much of the want of discipline in the ranks of the Church has sprung from the irregular education of her officers. 4 Matthew, xi. 12.

nominally of our own flock, and who had no wish to stray from the fold of our Church, were standing without our enclosures simply because they were too narrow to contain them, or because our shepherds were too few even to extend to all a simple invitation to enter. What, therefore, was in the first instance required, was to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes, and to proclaim to all, in broad and general terms, the rich pastures to be found within.

Our population had rapidly, and almost hopelessly outgrown our means of religious instruction; and utter ignorance, not only on doctrinal questions, but even on first principles of faith and morality, had been advancing step by step along with it. Hence, therefore, the emergency of the occasion perhaps almost justified the clergy in postponing the nicer distinctions of creed and formulary; and in rushing boldly, without rejecting any casual auxiliaries who might be willing to join them in the work, upon the masses of glaring ignorance and open depravity, with which the whole moral surface of the country was overrun. They had to preach, like John the Baptist—"the kingdom of heaven is at hand," before they could obtain an audience willing to hear, or capable of understanding the mysteries of it. And if, in the discharge of this preliminary mission, they were too ready to say,

"would God that all the Lord's people were prophets" -- if they somewhat misapplied the text-"he that is not against us is on our part" -- if they were too prone to symbolize with men of ambiguous doctrines and hostile creeds in their assaults upon an evil which was alike obnoxious, and common to all,—their plea was that the pressing urgency of the occasion swallowed up minor points of difference, and that when all the kings of the nations are combined against Israel, Israel may take Gibeon into alliance with them, and be blameless. Thus they proceeded, in simplicity and godly sincerity, to preach, on the broadest basis, the more obvious and practical truths of the Gospel; in hope that the wider the foundation, the firmer as well as loftier might be the Temple which it was their office to raise to the living God. But the excellency of a foundation, as well as the beauty of a superstructure, consists essentially in its being "fitly framed together;" and a fatal variety of handiwork soon appeared, in the gold and silver, mixed with wood, hay and stubble, of which the Temple, thus erected, was necessarily composed. No number of points of agreement can remove an original difference, however small; nor can any terms as to silence concerning questions which rather pervade others than have a separate existence, be ever kept. The only

effect of a peace secured on such conditions, is to disqualify the party sincerely observing them, for war.

And this appeared in the result. The essential distinctions which existed between the Anglican Church and those who differed from her, were still not only in existence, but in active operation, notwithstanding the cloak which a conventional charity had spread out to hide them; and while she was labouring for peace they were but seizing the occasion to make themselves ready for battle. It might have been hoped, that that battle was one in which, from the relation of the combatants to each other. she had all to gain, and little to lose. It might reasonably have been expected, that the Dissenter would have exposed the arrogant pretensions and un-catholic exclusiveness of the Romanist, while the Romanist would have demonstrated the utter want of all system, and discipline, and order in the Dissenter; and so the conclusion would have been. a mutual accordance in the primitive discipline, scriptural doctrine, and practical charity, of the Church of England. But no !- the result was altogether contrary to this most reasonable expectation; and they seem at once to have merged their own irreconcileable differences in their mutual hostility towards a common friend. They say to the Church, as the Egyptian did to Moses, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge?"—and the peacemaker among the brethren is treated as one that stirreth up strife!

In this position stands the Church of England at the present time. And it cannot be denied, that it is one of infinite disadvantage. One enemy has gained strength by her contempt, the other by her indulgence. She had supposed that the Church of Rome was so beaten down and utterly demolished, in former contests, as never to rise again. That having been once dragged into the light, while darkness was her natural element, she would open her eyes no more in the sunshine of modern intelligence and intellectual advancement. But Dagon has been set once more on his feet, and he standeth; and the Church is driven hastily to search for the instruments by which he was prostrated before. Happily they are still preserved in the armouries of our reforming Fathers; and we have still among us some who have never neglected to practise the use of them, and who are prepared to apply them with the skill of their original owners to the somewhat altered circumstances of the present time. These will doubtless maintain the ground which they occupy, and the character for learning and intrepidity which has always hitherto attached to their Church, till the rising generation, nursed in their principles and animated by their example, come forward in well-organized and irresistible array

to sweep this modification of error effectually and finally from the field.

With respect to the Dissenters, the grounds of our present disadvantages are altogether different, though our relative position with regard to them is nearly the same. There is so much in common between them and ourselves, and especially in those points which necessarily bring men of differing opinions most into connection with each othersuch as an open and earnest appeal to the judgment and conviction of the people at large-a mutual zeal for the general diffusion of knowledge, as an instrument which, rightly used, cannot but conduce to the propagation of those religious principles, the evidence and excellencies of which are based on knowledge-and a common hostility to an ecclesiastical tyranny, which made mental darkness its strong-hold, and sought to rule by superstition, formality and fear, rather than intelligence, light and love-these were points of so strong mutual agreement, between the Church and those who dissent from her communion, as led them for a time to forget their essential differences in the pursuit of a common and paramount good.7 Still the day was

⁷ These, it is painful to have to remind the reader, are the excellencies of dissent considered in a strictly *religious* point of view, and totally disjoined from any *political* considerations, which, in the early and best days of dissent were disclaimed, by

approaching, and every step in their harmonious progress brought them necessarily nearer to it, when the tacit conditions on which they had hitherto acted in concert must be explained. A period must arrive, in the cycle of all sciences and systems, when a rehearsal of first and fundamental principles must be resorted to, or all science and system will speedily disappear. That period has already arrived in the career which we have hitherto run, on so many points in union with those, who differ from us in so many others: we can no longer say to them, as Abram did to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren." Nor do they, indeed, all stand in the same near and

every section of non-conformists, as beneath a really pious man's consideration; and her necessary connexion with the political position of the country being one of their strongest, most reiterated, and most plausible objections against the Church of England. Now, all this is totally changed: to be a dissenter and a political partizan are now almost synonymous terms: and some degree of stigma will soon, I fear, attach itself to the very designation of dissenter, should any more of their leading characters follow the melancholy example which a *once* leading name amongst them has lately afforded to the astonished world, of the advocacy of the cause of laxity in religious doctrine and religious education, by one whose only distinction from his Christian brethren was the profession of extraordinary rigour as to religious opinions.

⁸ Gen, xiii. 8.

recognised relationship towards us as Lot did to Abraham—they are of various and discordant creeds—"Gebal and Ammon and Amalek; the Philistines, with them that dwell at Tyre; Assur also is joined with them; and have holpen the children of Lot."

Discordant, however, as they may be among themselves, they all agree in this: to deny to us those spiritual privileges, and that ecclesiastical authority, both in doctrine and discipline, of which the Romanist, though for very different reasons, would seek equally to deprive us.

Hence, therefore, as I began with asserting, the contest is about foundations. And well, perhaps, it may ultimately be found to be for the Church,

9 Psal. lxxxiii. 7, 8.

This will not be assented to, by some classes of dissenters, who will maintain that they do not hesitate to allow to the Church of England this authority over her own people. But to limit the Church thus, is to deny her Catholicity. Such rules of the Church as we hold to be essential, we hold also to be universally applicable, and to be binding alike upon the whole visible Church of Christ; and if it could be shewn that the Church of England maintains as vital, doctrines which are not so applicable, she would be bound, on her own professed principles, to retract them. Catholicity is her profession; and for any sect of Christians to make for their body rules by which they are necessarily withdrawn from her community, is to limit her power, and deny her truth, however it may appear, at first sight, to leave her at full liberty to enjoy and disseminate her religious opinions. If she is not Catholic, she is nothing.

however startling and momentous may be the immediate crisis, that the questions now in agitation are of such a nature, that no man of a deeply religious spirit, whatever may be his opinions, can be indifferent as to the issue. Minor points of controversy men of pious minds may be content to waive, the loss in christian charity being greater than the possible gain in the establishment of truth; and truth itself becomes undervalued, when the points in question are of so trivial a character that the disputant, when defeated, can always fall safely back upon the main question; or when the discussion has been so long protracted, that the world has had time to discover, by experience, of how little practical importance is the decision of the controversy. But when the question is one of fundamentals, the case is different. Here all men feel the importance of the result; and none can have so much reason to rejoice in such a decisive, however critical, conjuncture of affairs, as those who believe sincerely, that the truth is with them. For though the saying, that "Truth is great and will prevail," is, unfortunately, not a text of scripture, but is, in too many instances, contradicted both by the divine Word, and by human experience; yet, with respect to the Church of Christ, "we have the more sure word of prophecy,"11 that "the gates of

¹¹² Peter, 1, 19.

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hell shall not prevail against it. 12 Though, therefore, the victory may be long doubtful, it will not at last be given to error; whether it shall be assigned to any particular generation of the church, will depend upon the use which that generation makes of the opportunities and graces assigned to it;—it being the peculiar attribute of the Almighty, to make the final accomplishment of his own purposes consistent with the administration of equitable and moral justice, both to individuals and communities. 13 We see nothing in the aspect of things around us

13 It is melancholy to reflect of how little value are the lessons of experience, to churches and nations as well as to individuals. It may be well that the experiment of joining hand in hand with an opponent even by advancing over dangerous ground to meet him, should have been once more tried; for it proves at least the moderation of the Church, and her anxiety for that greatest of all earthly as well as spiritual blessings, religious peace. But we have no scriptural authority for, or example of winning men over to the gospel by conceding one iota of the truth; and when the system was tried before, in the Church of England, though conducted with infinitely more skill and judgment than the illconsidered and irregular compromises of the present day, the failure of the pious attempt was even more conspicuous than it is now. JEREMY TAYLOR, in his invaluable tract on "the Liberty of Prophesying," has approached in his concessions the extreme verge of liberality; though he has perhaps taken up no positions which are absolutely untenable, yet, to be maintained, they must constantly be considered as the very slenderest ties which can, in the view of the author, hold a visible church together. A small portion of the admirable abstract of Bishop Heber will give the to make us for a moment doubtful as to the final issue of the great struggle between truth and error; while if we see reason to fear that the victory may not come in our day, we perceive, at the same time, that the blame, and therefore the punishment, may justly belong to ourselves. The course of the external wave is often in one direction, while the main tide is stealing silently on

reader a clear insight into the bearing of his general argument. "In pursuit of this great scheme of general union, he begins by proving that "the duty of faith is completed in believing the articles of the apostles' creed," the composition of which, (with the exception of the article of Christ's descent into hell,) he ascribes to the apostles themselves, or to apostolical men in the first ages of Christianity, and which, as it contains nothing superfluous or which does not relate to those truths "which directly constitute the parts and work of our redemption," so must it have been necessarily esteemed sufficiently minute by its composers, and by that primitive church which adopted it as "the characteristic note of a christian from a heretic, or a Jew or an infidel." He admits, indeed, that it is neither unlawful nor unsafe for any of the rulers of the church, or any other competent judge, to extend his own creed to any further propositions which he may deduce from any of the articles of the apostles' creed. But he denies that any such deduction or exposition (unless it be such a thing as is at first evident to all), is fit to be pressed on others as an article of faith, or can "bind a person of a differing persuasion to subscribe under pain of losing his faith or being a heretic." "For," he nrges, "it is a demonstration that nothing can be necessary to be believed under pain of damnation, but such propositions of which it is certain that God hath spoken and taught them to us, and of which it is certain that this is their sense and purpose. For, if the sense be uncertain,

against it; and the gracious influences of the Gospel, in the midst of every discouragement, are, as we believe, gradually, but surely, ameliorating the opinions and hearts of men, preparatory to a wider extension and more open establishment of the visible kingdom of Christ. The very circumstance that the contest is now about essentials, is not of itself a disheartening consideration; for it is only thus that any general agreement on fundamental questions can ever be effected; and it ought rather to be a stimulus to the advocates of the truth to seize upon and improve an opportunity of accomplishing great and permanent good, which, if now neglected, may not soon be again vouchsafed.

we can no more be obliged to believe it in a certain sense, than we are to believe it at all, if it were not certain that God delivered it.

But, if it be only certain that God spake it, and not certain to what sense, our faith of it is to be as indeterminate as its sense, and it can be no other in the nature of the thing, nor is it consonant to God's justice to believe of him that he can or will require more."

And he concludes the section with a quotation from Tertullian, that, if the integrity and unity of this rule of faith be preserved, "in all other things men may take a liberty of enlarging their knowledges and prophesyings, according as they are assisted by the grace of God."

TAYLOR'S work, conceived and acted upon in this comprehensive spirit, might have been expected to answer the holy end proposed in it. Yet it is well known that it neither obtained toleration to his own church, then in persecution, nor did the principles which it advocates secure peace for her, either within or without, when she once more regained the ascendancy.

To such advocates of the truth, and who are as well prepared as they may be disposed for the controversy, we must be content to leave the discharge of a duty, which it is so much easier a task to recommend than to execute; confining ourselves to an undertaking, which our office seems especially to indicate—that of tracing, among contrariety of opinions, a simple outline of the truth. This is at least the most profitable and peaceful, if not the most convincing method, of conducting any argument on religious questions. It is best, for ourselves, to recount the broad and substantial articles which we do believe, in order to ascertain the precise limits where debateable points of faith begin. And it is best for those who differ from us, that such views as we hold to be essential, should be distinctly and unequivocally announced, in order that they may neither be induced to join us on mistaken conditions, nor continue to differ from us on points concerning which no substantial difference actually This openness of dealing has, in fact, been exists. always the characteristic of our Church. In her creeds, articles, and liturgies, she has expressed the substance of her faith with a clearness which it is impossible to mistake. And well would it be for many of her opponents if, in this, they would follow her example; and instead of making the very essence of their belief to consist almost entirely in

dissent from her doctrine, 14 would so specifically state the points of their difference or agreement with us, as to afford an opportunity, at least, of bringing such questions to a decisive, if not satisfactory issue.

That such a consummation is desirable, no man of any religious creed can doubt. When scripture speaks of the general character which ought to attach to the visible Church of Christ, there is no virtue more strongly enforced than that of unity, nor any sin more severely condemned than that of schism. Our Saviour's last emphatic prayer for the members of his collective Church was, that they

14 It seems to be a great disadvantage to the Dissenters themselves that they should have constantly to exert the best energies of their minds rather in opposing the Church than establishing the truth. Surely a life-time should not be exhausted in proving a negative—no man can hope to be saved upon a non credo. Let those among our opponents who are sincerely anxious for truth, never state their objections to our creed without explicitly propounding their own. Who now hears any thing of the Racovian Catechism from the Socinian controversialist? He wishes it to be thought that every man among them is his own interpreter of scripture,-than which it would probably be not easy to find a worse. This is uniting the worst evils of Popery and Latitudinarianism; it is "every man his own Pope," and that Pope without Rule or Council! It is of infinitely more value to every individual to ascertain truth than to confute error; the one concerns others, the other affects ourselves.

^{15 1} Cor. i. 10. 1 Cor. xi. 18. 1 Cor. xii. 25.

all might be one, even as He and his Father were Now though doubtless the spirit of this unity is perfectly consistent with much variety of opinion on questions which minister little to godly edification; yet it cannot be denied that it is the duty of every individual Christian to advance towards the fulfilment of it to the letter; and not to deviate, except upon strong and well-considered evidence, even from the minuter rules and ordinances of the Catholic Church of Christ. It is indeed a very great, even though it be a very common error, to suppose, that because a doctrine is indefinite, it is therefore indifferent. Such a notion strikes at the root of some of the most essential truths of scripture; which, momentous as they are, are often conveyed to us rather by implication, and through the processes of sound induction, than in the language of direct revelation. And indeed, all truth, whether natural or revealed, which goes beyond mere matters of fact, and partakes of the nature of the abstract, the conditional, or the infinite, must, at the same time, partake of that indefinite character which belongs at once to its own nature, and the varying and limited faculties of man. But it does not on that account become indifferent; nor does the right, however feeble, apprehension of it, become less essential to our salvation. The text

¹⁶ See John, xvii. 11. ad fin.

pronounces, in strong and reiterated terms of memorable condemnation, the sentence of those who preach any other gospel than that which Paul preached. Yet, though nothing can be clearer than the punishment, nothing can be more indefinite than the offence. And the object of this appears to have been, to shew that no wilful deviation from the strict truth would be pardoned—that our obedience to the revealed will of God admits not of limitation or degree—and that in the minutest parts of the Gospel there is the truth, concerning which it at least behoves "every man to be fully persuaded in his own mind." 17

With these views, then, with regard to the present aspect of religious affairs; and with the humble hope of doing no dis-service to the cause of truth by adopting such a course of argument,—we propose to take a cursory (for it can only be a cursory) view of some of the main questions on which the integrity and even existence of the Catholic Church may be said to hinge, and in which all minor debates and controversies will be found ultimately to merge. Our attention, then, shall in the first instance, be directed to the foundation of all revealed truth—the inspiration and authority of scripture. Upon this will naturally follow an enquiry into the necessity and validity of Creeds. Then, as a modification

¹⁷ Romans, xiv. 5.

and extension of the same principle, we are led to the consideration of Articles of Religion. This brings us directly to the subject of Rituals and Liturgies; and our inquiry would not be complete, without some explication of the sin of Schism; and the authority which the Catholic Church ought to possess, to guard itself from external injury, and to propagate its doctrines by education or other public instruction. All these are vital questions; they are all the subject of much doubt and earnest debate; and concerning each there is the truth, to which we may doubtless be permitted to approximate, by the help of sincere and sober investigation. The learning and research with which each of these subjects has been discussed, must be left to be sought in those voluminous and standard works where they are readily to be found. It is with results rather than processes that we are at present compelled to deal; and if from some patient and unbiassed thought on topics concerning which absolute certainty is not attainable, we can in some measure simplify these complex questions, and at least ascertain the strong and weak points of each of them, such a summary view as we now propose will neither be deficient in interest nor in practical utility. May, then, the blessing of God rest upon these our labours! May I be enabled to speak in such language as best becomes the momentous import of

these questions—and the weakness of him who thus ventures to approach them; and may you be disposed to hear in such a spirit, as, while it may most profit by these inquiries, will be the readiest to pardon such deficiences as spring rather from the feebleness of the advocate, than the want of importance in his subject, or of truth in his conclusions.

END OF LECTURE I.



LECTURE II.

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS—THE OLD TESTAMENT LITERALLY A LAW, BOTH AS TO INSTRUMENT, WRITTEN LAWS, AND ADMINISTRATORS OF IT—THE NEW, IN EACH OF THESE RESPECTS, LESS DEFINITELY SO—THE OLD LAYING MORE POSITIVE AND EXPRESS CLAIMS TO DIRECT INSPIRATION THAN THE NEW—NO INFERIORITY IN THE NEW ON THESE ACCOUNTS PROVED, FIRST, BECAUSE THESE DIFFERENCES ARE THOSE OF OMISSION—THOSE PRINCIPLES IN THE OLD WHICH ARE CONTINUED IN THE NEW, ARE NOT EXPRESSED BECAUSE IMPLIED—SECONDLY, BECAUSE EVEN CHANGES MAY BE ENFORCED BY TYPE AS STRONGLY AS BY DIRECT PRECEPT—THIS ILLUSTRATED BY THE CHANGE OF THE SABBATH DAY, AND ALSO BY THE CONTINUANCE OF THE PRIESTHOOD, AND THE LEGAL POWER OF, THE GOSPEL, UNDER FORMS ADAPTED TO THE NEW CONDITION OF THINGS—SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT.



LECTURE II.

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

Hebrews, viii. 4, 5.

There are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things; as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle; for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

In turning to the consideration of the Authority and Inspiration of the Scriptures, it is important to observe, that there are sundry points of great apparent difference, in these respects, between the Old and New Testaments; which, though not generally dwelt upon, seem material to a distinct understanding of the question, and are too obvious to escape the notice of even the most hasty enquirer.

The terms Old and New Law—Old and New Testament, or Covenant, so often used in connexion, suggest a correspondence between them, in form and character, as well as object, of which few traces are discoverable on examination. The Old Testament certainly supplies us with a Law, according to the strict meaning of the term. An instrument

is there selected by the Almighty, for the purpose of communicating this law to his creatures, who is authorized and accredited for the office by undeniable credentials. This law deals not in generals, but in particulars the most definite and minute. With respect to moral acts, it lays down specific rules of conduct, which, at least in their direct bearings, are plain and intelligible to all. And with respect to acts ceremonial and civil, it details every thing to be done or avoided with a studied clearness of language, which might indeed be neglected, but could not possibly be misunderstood. Again, all these laws were written laws, (some, in fact, by the finger of God himself, which betokens the weight and importance of even their verbal form,) and all by the hand of the immediate Lawgiver, in a book whose integrity was to be most carefully guarded throughout all generations, 18 and with the additional security of the most severe denunciations against those who should hereafter presume to "add thereto, or diminish from it." Nor did its correspondence with laws in general, rest here. Administrators of this law were likewise appointed; and specified with as much minuteness, and protected from corruption or change with the same solemn sanctions, as the law itself. The order, and mutual subordination, and several offices

¹⁸ See Deut, xvii, 18, 19.

of the priesthood, were all most distinctly prescribed. They had their rules of conduct in the discharge of their administration (and these rules likewise well known to those over whom they presided) from which they could not deviate without the most serious punishments. Here, then, was a law complete in every requisite: an infallible law-giver—a written and unchangeable statute—and a fixed and responsible administration of it.

But, as far as this definiteness of character extends, we discover little corresponding to it in the new Law of the Gospel. We find, indeed, a Lawgiver, of a much more exalted character, and entrusted with powers far less limited and defined, than was Moses. But the mode of legislation adopted by him differed in almost every respect from his, who was, in several important characteristics, his forerunner and prototype. He propounded no system to his followers at all approaching, in form, to our notions of a legal code. He not only did not write, or any where direct his disciples to write, ¹⁹ any systematic account of the rules of his

¹⁹ Of course this assertion will be understood in its literal and broad acceptation, that no writer of the New Testament has informed us that he composed the volume of which he is the author at the express command of his Lord. Nor is any reference made to the book of Revelation—a work sui generis. We can well conceive that, in the forty days after the resurrection, during which period our Lord had frequent and familiar intercourse with his

revelation, or the principles and precepts by which his followers were to be guided, but it is only in the most incidental shape possible, that we are enabled to collect what these principles and precepts were. The first four Books of what we style the New Testament, consist principally of memoirs of his life, with miscellaneous notices of his doctrines, written by men, who nowhere say, like Moses, that they wrote at the express command of their Master, or that their works contain all that it is necessary to know on the subjects which they profess to treat. The book of the Acts is, in like manner, a short record of some leading events in the early history of his Church, and the lives of a few of his disciples, written as it professes, in continuation of a work, which had been undertaken rather to remind him to whom it was addressed of the main facts of which he had previously been informed, than to comprise a full and complete narrative of the early fortunes of the infant Church of Christ. Again, with respect to the Epistles, they would seem to be the most accidental productions in the world.

Apostles, and gave them full instructions with regard to every thing relating to the kingdom of God, this duty, of recording its history and doctrines, would not fail to be prescribed. But such prescription is not asserted by them in their works; it is rather, like many other important truths, taken for granted; it being doubtless concluded, and reasonably so, by the Apostles, that all who held their writings to be inspired, would hold, likewise, that they were written from a divine motive.

Some addressed to local Churches, and some to individuals; apparently occasioned by slight, and not a few of them by forgotten occurrences; mostly confining themselves to the point immediately in hand, and seldom indeed entering formally and systematically on the great and fundamental principles of the gospel-not arrogating to themselves the character of being all-sufficient teachers and expounders of the faith-making no appeals to posterity—and not distinctly professing to have any object beyond the immediate occasion which called them forth. Neither St. Paul, nor any other writer of the New Testament, gives any precept to his readers that his works shall be accurately copied, or carefully treasured up, as a possession for ever to the Church, and as a future standard of religious faith and practice.

And as with the Law, so with the administration of it. We have no family of men set apart, as in the Mosaic dispensation, for the purpose of exclusively guarding or expounding this new religious system; there is as little minuteness in the execution as in the legislation. And though an order of men to whom an analogous and perpetual authority is committed, be carefully instituted, yet their functions are apparently as indefinite, as the law of which they are the constituted guardians and interpreters.

A difference, similar to this, may be traced between the authority and inspiration severally claimed by the writers under the old and new dispensations. Moses never forgets, and never permits his readers for one moment to forget, that he is constantly speaking, acting, and writing under the immediate suggestive influence of the Almighty. "Thus saith the Lord," occurs at every turn. He is not satisfied with generally asserting his divine commission, but, with every separate revelation with which he is intrusted, he minutely records the manner in which it was communicated, and generally the very words in which it was conveyed. This is likewise true of every succeeding prophet. With perhaps the single exception of David, who sometimes mingles together his human and divine inspirations, the prophet distinctly separates his own language from that which he propounds to his hearers as coming from "the mouth of the Lord." He does not stand forth as a man rendered wiser and better than his audience by the general influence of the Spirit, but as one to whom some fact is revealed or office committed concerning which he is but a humble and passive instrument. Apart from his duty, he is an ordinary man.

Now here again, we observe a striking difference between the writers of the Old and New Testaments. The authors of the Gospels and Acts hardly appear at all in their personal characters; and, with the exception of St. John, afford no internal clue to their identity. They lay no distinct claim to inspiration; they give few hints as to whence they derived their knowledge of what they record. And the writers of the Epistles, also, rather take for granted that none of their readers would dispute their divine authority, than attempt, for one moment, to vindicate it to themselves. With the exception of St. Paul, and there are obvious reasons, in his history, why he should be an exception,20 they all rather imply than assert that they "had the Spirit of God." It is not once declared by them that they write by the command, and under the immediate superintendence of the Holy Ghost-or that what they record is all that is necessary for man to know-or that what they write, it is a religious duty of the church to reverence and preserve. Unlike the

²⁰ "St. Paul, of all the Apostles of Christ, met with the greatest opposition and contempt from the false Judaizing apostles, that troubled the Church in his time. The true reason whereof was, that he first of all openly and everywhere proclaimed the utter abolition of the Mosaic law, both as to Jews and Gentiles. But the pretence seems to be this, that he was none of the twelve apostles, called by Christ himself when on earth; nor afterwards duly elected in the room of any of that number, as Matthias was: but an odd thirteenth apostle, thrusting himself into that office, they knew not how, or by what authority. For the relation of Christ's glorious appearance to him from heaven, and sending him to preach his

writers of the Old Testament, they seem to trust entirely to their readers' knowledge of their personal character and office, for the reception and reverence which may be given to their writings.

It cannot be denied, then, that in these two respects, both as to their authoritative and legal form, and their internal claim of being the immediate result of divine inspiration, there is, apparently, a wide difference between the books of the Old, and those of the New Testament. It may be possible to account for this difference without conceding any inferiority in either of these respects, of the New Testament to the Old.

In the first place then, it will be perceived, that the differences which we have remarked upon, are chiefly those of *omission*. The same fulness of detail, accuracy of form, and removal of all ground of mistake, are *not* observed in the New as in the Old Testament. And the first and most obvious

gospel among the gentiles, (which indeed was a higher call than any of the other apostles had,) doubtless they rejected as a mere fiction......Against these calumniators he strenuously vindicated his divine mission and authority. He excellently and fully demonstrates, that he was not in any respect inferior to the very chiefest of the apostles, neither in his sufferings, nor in his miracles, nor in his generous charity and unwearied diligence in the discharge of his office, nor in the success of it; nay, that in the three things last mentioned he exceeded all the other apostles; nor in the point of rerelations made known to him." Bull. Sermon 4. Works.

reason for this is, that they were not necessary. Christianity is not a new religion, but a more complete revelation of one already partially disclosed; nor is the form which it assumes, or the books in which it is recorded, intended to supersede, but to continue and complete those which had already been long known to the world. Now that distinctness of statement, which is absolutely necessary in the promulgation of any new system, is by no means requisite in a scheme which assumes an earlier one as its substantial basis, and general outline. In this latter case, the minuteness required is rather to specify what is not approved and adopted, than to point out what is continued; as all bequests in a human testament are held good and binding, unless specially revoked in the codicil which may be appended to it. Taking then this view of the Gospel, with reference to the Law of Moses, we are not surprised, but, on the contrary, hold it to be just what we ought to expect, that no allusion should be made to those points in which the analogy between them is not broken; and maintain that analogy to be even the more binding, because the new law has not thought it necessary to guard against the possibility of neglecting it. Thus the writers, the books, and the priesthood of the Gospel, are not fenced about with the same safeguards, and recommended by the same

irresistible testimony, as those of the Old Testament; for they were built upon the old as a foundation—were addressed to those who were perfectly familiar with it, and were sure to be at once admitted in all their pretensions, provided the substantial grounds of their claims to credit could not be impugned. The Epistle to the Hebrews shews, at once, how far this analogy between the two covenants might be carried, and how unnecessary the writer held it to pursue the argument through all its branches.

But it may reasonably be alleged, that though this argument goes far towards accounting for the omission of all notice of the continuance of such portions of the Old Covenant, as are alike essential to both; yet it makes little towards the justification of those silent changes which were adopted, and in matters, too, as we have seen, of very considerable moment, in the construction of the New Covenant. To account for this, and to shew that these changes were not only justifiable, but even compulsory; and so much so, as to supersede any necessity for even alluding to, or recording them, let us consider that the Mosaic Law was the type, as well as the commencement, of the Christian system, and that it prefigured it, not only in what was to be continued, but also in what was to be done away. Now a type is of the nature of a precept. The Almighty, in the primitive ages of the world, commanded as often by signs as by words; and when these signs had their accomplishment, men were as much bound to fulfil the anti-type, to the very letter, as they had previously been to fulfil the outward sign, or obey any other distinct command of God. Hence these changes to which we have alluded, were made silently, and without express direction; because they were necessarily implied in that outward form to which they succeeded, and had been already included in the command which established that which went before. To illustrate this by an example. It has always been matter of some surprise that a change so great as that of the Sabbath from the last to the first day of the week, should have taken place, without any express command on the subject, or even any distinct record of the transaction, in the word of God. We find there, indeed, that the change did, and that very early, take place in the Church; but it is always alluded to, rather as a matter of course, than as being, as in truth it was, a momentous deviation from the precept of the Law. Much more satisfactory reasons can be assigned for the change itself, than for this profound silence concerning it. But we seem to perceive one in the preceptive character of a type, which will account for the non-necessity of prescribing or recording this change, by the utter impossibility of avoiding of it. The observance of the Sabbath, as is well known, was imposed on the Jews for a two-fold reason: they were commanded to observe one day in seven, to commemorate the creation of the world—they were commanded to observe a particular day in seven, to commemorate their own deliverance, on that particular day, from the bondage of Egypt. When Moses rehearses the Law to the people, he adds, after the fourth commandment—"And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out hence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." 22 As

²¹ There are, of course, various other good and cogent reasons for this change, which are familiar to every student of divinity. This is here assigned, not as being the sole, but as a sufficient reason.

²² Deut. v. 15. Bishop Horsley, in one of his admirable sermons on the Sabbath, has the following remark: "It has been imagined that a change was made of the original day by Moses—that the Sabbath was transferred by him from the day on which it had been originally kept in the patriarchal ages, to that on which the Israelites left Egypt. The conjecture is not unnatural; but it is, in my judgment, a mere conjecture, of which the sacred history affords neither proof nor confutation." The change of the day by Moses may be doubtful; but had the Bishop sufficiently weighed the force of the text above quoted, he would not have hesitated to allow, that the reason assigned by him for the observance of the particular day, was to commemorate the Egyptian deliverance.

far then as the first reason for observing the Sabbath, and therefore one day in seven, is concerned, it is immutable; as far as regards the second, which specified the particular day, it was not only mutable, but inasmuch as the reason on which it was founded was itself a type of something to follow, it was necessarily to be changed when the anti-type arrived. The deliverance from Egypt fore-shadowed the deliverance of all mankind from more than Egyptian bondage; and as the commemoration of the former of necessity passed away when the actual deliverance had been completed, so was the day on which it was celebrated as necessarily changed, for that on which the real and effectual transaction took If it would have been absurd to continue to offer the Paschal Lamb after the real Lamb of God had been slain, which took away the sins of the world; it would have been not less so, to observe the day on which their earthly deliverance took place, when the day of their spiritual liberation that of the resurrection of our Lord-was known. The type was, in this case, a precept; and commanded the change as clearly, as, in the first instance, it had commanded the observance.

The same mode of reasoning may be applied, and with undiminished force, to the two other important differences between the Old Law and the New, to which we have specially alluded; viz., the estab-

lishment of fixed administrators, or a prescribed succession in the Priesthood; and also the strictly legal form in which the writings of the respective legislators under the two systems are couched. In both these cases, a silent but essential change took place under the scheme of the Gospel; and the principle which we have just laid down, will shew that this silence arose not from the indifference of the matter, but the very contrary—from its being taken for granted that the *changes* were absolutely necessary, to maintain the *identity* of character which existed between the two systems.

With respect to the Priesthood. The Law of Moses was of such a character, as necessarily to require a considerable number of men, and those of various grades and offices, to put it into execution. The services of the Temple, at once incessant and multifarious, could only be conducted by a large body of public servants, well trained for their several offices, and enabled to devote the whole of their time to the duties of their ministry, by absolute freedom from all secular cares and occupations. Hence the propriety of an office so minute and complicated being hereditary in a particular family, and the necessity, also, for a public provision for their maintenance.²³ And though that department of

²³ That provision, we may remark, was very equitably proportioned to their numbers—the secular tribes contributing one-tenth

the priestly office which had reference to the public instruction of the people, (if it ever strictly belonged to the priesthood), seems to have been encroached upon in our Saviour's day, by the interference of the Scribes and Pharisees, yet the ceremonial observances of the Law were still, as at first, committed entirely to that order; neither the Babylonian captivity, nor successive subjugation to foreign powers, having been able to obliterate the Jewish accuracy of genealogical descent. Indeed, an hereditary priesthood was essential to the very existence of the Jewish Law. Now in this, as in other respects, the law was a type of the gospel: and here, also, as in the case of the Sabbath, not only implied its own cessation, but indicated, nay enforced the precise character of its substitute. With the change in the law came a strictly analogous change in the administration of it. The religious rites, and ceremonial observances passed away, when they had been fulfilled in the advent of Him to whose office and ministry they all referred: and with them ceased all necessity for the peculiar qualifications of that order, whose principal duty it was to administer them. Though, while none but Jews were admissible to the full privileges of the law, it was evident that none but a Jewish family could be permitted to put it into

of their produce to the support of those who ministered to them in spiritual things.

execution,24 yet when that law became so expanded as to include the whole world, it was equally clear that this condition must at once be obsolete, and the priesthood, by strict analogy, become co-extensive with the covenant. But that the order itself should absolutely cease and pass away, was no more contemplated, than that the promises, and prophecies, and spiritual meaning of the law should fail. From that law neither one jot, not one tittle shall pass, till all be fulfilled,—but the administration of the law, as now spread out and fully revealed in the Gospel, can never be fulfilled, till sin and error and ignorance be rooted out of the world, and there shall be new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Neither, then, can the priesthood of such a law pass away.

And this view of the subject is strengthened, if not confirmed, by the conduct of our blessed Saviour, in instituting the outward ceremonies of his

²⁴ "The only or chief cause (if I am not deceived) why God restrained the Priestly Function to one Tribe, was for a sign and band of the restraint of his Church to one People. For as the Church cannot be without the sacred Function of the Ministry; so likewise the condition thereof must follow the condition of the Ministry. As long, therefore, as none could be a Priest but of the Tribe of Levi, so long there could be no Church but of that People whereof Levi was a Tribe. A point of Sacred Policy, so to order the choice of Ministers, as shall be most fit to uphold the present state of an established Church." Mede, Disc. 35.

own religion. He strictly enjoins that the Sacraments shall be perpetually administered in his church, without, at the same time, specifying, except in general terms, by whom that administration shall be performed. Now, as the observance of a perpetual rite necessarily pre-supposes the existence of a perpetual order of men who shall be responsible for the execution of it, nothing would seem to be clearer than that, in his intention, a modified form of priesthood followed as necessarily upon the expiration of the old, as his own significant and spiritual rites did upon the now lifeless ceremonies of the typical law of Moses. We can no more conceive a breach in the succession of the priesthood, than a suspension of the administration of the sacraments.

Lastly, with respect to the deviation from the strictly legal form which is observable in the code of the Gospel, when compared with the law of Moses. This difference not only arises necessarily out of the different character of the two dispensations, but is typified and shadowed forth in the Old Testament itself. The formal regulations, and precise rules of the Mosaic Law did not, as it would appear, meet all the wants of the Jewish people; and more especially when they began to come in contact with the mightier nations around them, and more complex rules of action were required, which,

though doubtless comprehended in the law, were not easily deducible from it, especially by ignorant and unwilling minds. Hence arose the necessity for a succession of Prophets, whose office it was not merely to predict, to threaten, and exhort; but also, as it were, to give a more spiritual tone to the legal provisions of the law, and prepare the people, gradually, for taking a more comprehensive view of the latent truths which lurked under its ritual and ceremonial forms.25 It is in this strain that Isaiah opens his "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? Saith the Lord .- Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."26 And language of this spiritual character runs through all the prophets. They constantly generalize and expand

²⁵ "This then is the reign of predictive revelation, and the proper age of the Prophets. It is the middle period of the first dispensation, standing equally removed, in time, and in some of its characters, from the Law, and from the Gospel; and the service of Prophecy during this period forms a great connecting link of divine information between the two." Davison's Discourses on Prophecy, Disc. v. No student in Divinity ought to overlook this invaluable work, which, notwithstanding some peculiarity and apparent obscurity of style, is full of matter calculated to awaken deep and profitable thought in the mind of even the most ordinary reader.

²⁶ Isaiah, i. 11, 16, 17.

those great and comprehensive principles, which in the law, are often couched under a single practical case; and gradually prepare the mind to expect a system of things which shall step beyond the "beggarly elements of the law," to embrace and regulate all the springs and motives of human action. have only to read our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, which is, in fact, a spiritual comment on the text of Moses, to see this principle of the prophets carried out to its full extent, and the Mosaic law placed under that point of view which its Founder intended it to assume towards those who were able to bear it. When, therefore, the new revelation was fully developed, the grand characteristic of which consisted especially in the sublime doctrines which it unfolded-when, moreover, it is considered that its object was to legislate for man in all his relations, and guide the heart and will as well as the outward life—it was clearly impossible that the original form of a Law could any longer be retained: nor can we conceive of any other adequate to the occasion than that which was adopted ;-ends so infinitely various could not have been attained, except through the infinite variety of the Gospel. And therefore its lessons are not the less binding upon our consciences, because they are promulgated to us, not directly in the form of a legal system, but through channels which convey them to every faculty of man, -- whether

they come in the shape of instruction, allusion, or example; whether addressed to the reason, the imagination, or the heart. The great principle of Faith, on which the whole fabric of the Gospel rests, and which mainly distinguishes it from the more obvious and tangible motives of the law, rendered it impossible to legislate, under the Gospel scheme, with the same formality and minuteness as under the Old Dispensation: it was a principle which, in action, was to adapt itself to each individual character, and could therefore be fully illustrated and enforced, only by examples and rules as various as there are diversities of the human mind. In this point of view, what St. Paul asserts of scripture in general is especially characteristic of the New Testament: it thus becomes "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."27

If, then, we have established our point, we have shewn that there are reasons for those changes, which, at first sight, appear to give a character of greater laxity to the new law as compared with the old—whether with regard to the priesthood, the alteration of the sabbath and other ordinances, or the strictly legal form of the law itself—reasons which shew, that the authority of the second law is not

²⁷ H Tim. iii. 16, 17.

less strict and absolute, than that of the first. For it appears that the first pre-supposes, nay commands, the changes of the second; and thus not only sanctions such alterations, but gives to them all the force of the original statute. The text puts this notion in a striking point of view. It represents the Law as being itself a copy and transcript of the Gospel, as it already existed in the divine mindas being a distinct shadow, thrown forward from a pre-existing substance:—"See," saith he to Moses, when he was about to make the tabernacle, (an abstract expression for the Jewish economy)-" see that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the Mount." This is a consideration which appears to relieve the mind of much anxiety, when the New Testament evidence on some of the points above alluded to, is brought under discussion. We can then fall back upon the original constitution of the Mosaic Law, and argue from its acknowledged Plenary Authority to that of the New Testament, with a degree of confidence which grows stronger the more closely the connection between the Old Testament and the New is established. "What," says Justin Martyr, "is the Law? the Gospel predicted: What is the Gospel? the Law fulfilled."28 Or as Hooker expresses it: "The general end, both of Old and New, is one; the dif-

²⁸ Quæst, et Resp. 101.

ference between them consisting in this, that the Old did make wise by teaching salvation through Christ that should come; the New, by teaching that Christ the Saviour is come, and that Jesus whom the Jews did crucify, and whom God did raise from the dead, is he."²⁹

The question of Inspiration, on which, as we have already stated, a similar discrepancy exists between the records of the two Dispensations; and which is also, in itself, a subject not only of the deepest importance, but also involving much difference of opinion; will form matter for the succeeding Lecture. When we trust it will appear that the apostle's words may be taken in their widest and strongest acceptation—"All scripture is given by inspiration of God."

²⁹ Book 1. § 14.

END OF LECTURE II.

LECTURE III.

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

THE ARGUMENT.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT-QUESTION HERE CONFINED TO THE INSPIRATION OF THE WRITTEN WORD-DISTINCTION BETWEEN IN-SPIRED WRITINGS AND INSPIRED MEN-VERBAL THEORY ADVOCATED-VERBAL ACCURACY NECESSARY WHEN THE THING RECORDED WAS UNKNOWN OR UNINTELLIGIBLE TO THE WRITER-WORDS OF THE UTMOST MOMENT BECAUSE WE THINK IN THEM-VERBAL INSPIRA-TION AS NECESSARY FOR WRITING AS SPEAKING-INDISPENSABLE IN SOME CASES, THEREFORE POSSIBLE IN ALL-ENTIRE KNOWLEDGE OF LANGUAGES, IN SOME INSTANCES, THROUGH INSPIRATION-SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY TO VERBAL INSPIRATION -- THE TESTIMONY OF THE FATHERS-AND OF LATER DIVINES-OBJECTIONS ANSWERED, FROM INELEGANCE OF STYLE-FROM DISCREPANCIES IN ACCOUNTS OF THE SAME TRANSACTION-FROM VARIOUS READINGS-ADVANTAGES ARISING FROM THE VERBAL THEORY-IMPORTANT POINTS OF FAITH OFTEN INVOLVED IN SINGLE WORDS - SOME MISCONSTRUCTIONS OF THE DOCTRINE GUARDED AGAINST-CONCLUSION.



LECTURE III.

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

1 Corinthians, ii. 12, 13.

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.

The question of Inspiration is one of the most important in the whole range of Theology, because it lies at the very root of all scriptural interpretation; the views which are taken of it affect every doctrine of Christianity, and are the main source of all the various lights in which such doctrines are regarded, by different sects of Christians. It is in this field that the learned liberalism of Germany has laboured most diligently, and that the laxity of our own country has most faithfully followed in its steps; both justly conceiving, that to introduce doubt and uncertainty into the revealed word of God, was the best mode of defending the utmost latitude both in the faith and practice of man.

We have no space, nor would it answer our present purpose, to take into consideration all the various kinds and degrees of Inspiration; we shall confine ourselves to that in which the existing church has the most direct interest, and which bears immediately upon our professed design; viz. The Inspiration which was concerned in the written word of God. Upon this question depends the degree of authority which we assign to that word, and the extent of latitude which may be taken in the interpretation of it.

The range of our inquiry will be much narrowed as well as simplified, if we at once allow the course of argument which was pursued in the last Lecture to be applicable in this case also; and consider all the proofs and declarations of Inspiration which appear in the Old Testament to belong with no less force to the New. The mere silence which is sometimes observed, on this point, in the latter, is more than counterbalanced by the greater number and magnitude of its miracles, its more minute history of the operations of the Holy Spirit, and the more important character and general concernment of its revelations.

Our subject, then, we would wish it to be borne in mind, is the Inspired writings of Scripture, and not the Inspired men. These, it will at once be evident, are almost entirely distinct questions. The actors in Scripture might have been plenarily inspired, both in words and ideas, and yet the Scripture record of their actions may be imperfect; while on the other hand, the Scripture may supply a most accurate account of the results of their imperfect inspiration. I trust it will appear in the sequel, that, whatever different degrees of inspiration might have been vouchsafed to the several instruments of revelation, the Scripture report of the original promulgation of that revelation is not only accurate, but, in the substantial sense of the word, verbal.

In the first place, with respect to the matter which the writers of Scripture had to record, it cannot be denied, that verbal accuracy was sometimes indispensable. Many of the communications from heaven were delivered by God to the prophet in a precise form of words, and were repeated by him, as having been so delivered, to the people. Moreover, many of the prophecies were of such a nature as to be totally unintelligible to the prophet himself; they referred to periods and events long posterior to his own times; and were not intended to be understood till the time of their fulfilment drew nigh, or even till that time was past; and were often so worded as to have a two-fold and most apposite reference to events the most distant, and even the most apparently incongruous. Here, it was absolutely necessary that the prophet should be inspired, not only with the general sentiment, but with the very words also. The application of the prophecy, in such cases, mostly turns upon the aptness of the phraseology; and the prophet could not himself express that which he did not comprehend. In this case verbal inspiration is required in the prophet, and, to the same extent, verbal accuracy in the recorder of the prophecy.

In truth, it is not easy to conceive how any one, in the capacity of a prophet, or a teacher of new doctrines, can be inspired *generally* with religious sentiments, (according to the present prevalent notion), without any guidance or control as to the words in which they are to be conveyed. We can indeed easily understand that this may be the case

any private interpretation.' And the reason is this,—that the predictions of the prophets did not, like their own private thoughts and sentiments, originate in their own minds. The prophets, in the exercise of their office, were necessary agents, acting under the irresistible impulse of the omniscient Spirit, who made the faculties and the organs of those holy men his own instruments for conveying to mankind some portion of the treasures of his own knowledge. Futurity seems to have been delineated in some sort of emblematical picture, presented by the Spirit of God to the prophet's mind, which, preternaturally filled and heated with this scenery, in describing the images obtruded on the fantasy, gave pathetic utterance to wisdom not its own. "For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Horsley's Sermons.

with regard to the ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit. They are rather infused into the existing character of the man, than form a distinct and separable element. They convey no new information. They enlighten and invigorate and direct his natural powers, not so much influencing the developement without, as the principle within. But with respect to the extraordinary influences of the Holy Spirit, the case is altogether different. They were given for specific purposes, and those to whom they were vouchsafed, had distinct doctrines to reveal, or prescribed actions to perform; and we can no more conceive them left to their own discretion as to the language in which they propounded these doctrines, than to their own time and manner in exhibiting their miraculous powers. If the task was momentous enough to require miraculous assistance to perform it, it was equally so to require a like aid as to the method of discharging it.

"We think in words." No one has any very distinct notion of the sentiments of his own mind so long as they are permitted to float about in vague generalities, and have not been clothed in the definite shape of language. And, even then, whether they at all realize his own conceptions of them depends entirely upon the phraseology in which he is enabled to clothe them; a single inappropriate, or even misplaced word often giving

an altogether different complexion to the sentiment which it is intended to embody. And if this be true of our own ideas, how much more is it true of those which belong to another; and if we cannot realize, even to ourselves, notions which originate in our own minds, without the help of language, how can we, except through the same instrument, receive them from an outward source, or, still more, convey them accurately to others? Precision of language is not only a mark, but it is also an instrument, of precision of thought; and if it be indispensable for even the ordinary intercourse between man and man, how much more is it requisite when we treat on subjects which in themselves are as abstruse as they are important?

Turning, then, from the oral to the written word, it will not be denied that verbal inspiration was at least as necessary to him who recorded, as to him who first gave utterance to, the very words of the Almighty. If an accurate knowledge of these words was necessary for one generation, it was equally so for all posterity. When he who spoke and he who wrote were the same person, it cannot be doubted that the same infallible guidance would be vouchsafed to his pen as to his tongue; when they were different, an additional revelation would be required for him who had to register with the utmost accuracy, language which he had never

heard, and which had never hitherto been revealed to him. And we are justified in saying "the utmost accuracy,"—for where the writer professes to give the very words of the prophecy or narrative, there is no alternative between the strict truth and positive error.

Granting, then, that verbal inspiration was as necessary to him who wrote as to him who spoke, in certain cases—such as in recording matters immediately enunciated by the Almighty; or prophecies at the time involved in total mystery; or revelations beyond the comprehension of the writers themselves; granting so much, we shall find that all the difficulties which are supposed to lie against the hypothesis of verbal inspiration must be encountered; while, if we ask no more, almost all the benefits which evidently arise out of it will at once be sacrificed. But the arguments in favour of verbal inspiration, whether from reason, revelation, or external testimony, seem far to outweigh any objections that have hitherto been alleged against it.

Confining our attention, for a moment, to the Gospels, it is at once evident that they could not possibly have been written without the aid of inspiration. Whether we consider the condition of the authors, the times when they were composed, or the nature of their contents, it is clear that the human intellect alone could not have produced

them in such a shape as to command our unreserved credence and respect. But if the Holy Spirit interfered at all, why not effectually? If we allow that Mark and Luke, not being eye and ear witnesses, would require supernatural assistance as to the matter of their books, it does not seem any very additional degree of credulity to suppose that they had similar assistance as to the manner of composing them. If St. John required such aid, as he must needs have done, to recall, after so long an interval, the conversations which our Saviour had with the Pharisees and his disciples—conversations given with the greatest minuteness, and in themselves of the utmost doctrinal importance, why should we suppose that he was not enabled to do that in which their main value consists, viz. to give them exactly as they were first uttered? It was, indeed, one of the predicted offices of the Holv Ghost, that he should give this power to the Apostles: "He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you:"2 and if the Apostles remembered "what he said," doubtless they would not fail to record it exactly as it was spoken.

Another probable argument in favour of verbal inspiration, *in all cases*, is, that we know that it must have taken place *in some*, viz. when the know-

² John xiv. 26.

ledge of the language itself was communicated by inspiration. Here every word was the direct suggestion of the Holy Spirit; and it would be a gratuitous limitation to the operations of that Spirit to suppose that He who supplied the words did not also direct and regulate the use of them.

It is more than probable, when the history of the Apostles is considered, that some of the books of the New Testament were written in language thus divinely communicated. It has sometimes appeared to myself, that the most valuable of them all (if we may venture in such a case to make comparisons) the Gospel of St. John-bears internal marks of this heavenly origin. The total absence of all trace of dialect, or idiom common to any other writer—the simple sublimity of its style—the striking paucity of synonymes—the fitness of the language to subjects in themselves the most spiritual and abstruse —and the almost Homeric repetition of the same idea in the same phraseology, might all be expected to mark a language, precisely adapted and limited to the purpose to which it here applied, and communicated by a Power, which at once omits nothing, and does nothing in vain.3

³ The question as to which of the Writers of the New Testament received the language in which they wrote from direct inspiration, has not yet been discussed with the earnestness which the indefinite extent, and (perhaps it should be added) the unprofitable

With respect to the scripture evidence on the subject of verbal inspiration, it will create no surprise that the universality of the immediate suggestion of the words is no where therein asserted; nor is this a doctrine which it is necessary for a moment to entertain. For where the facts are such as not to require the aid of inspiration, it is unnecessary to call in that aid as the instrument of conveying them. The exact truth is all that is requisite in any verbal communication; and when that is within the compass of ordinary means, no extraordinary assist-

character of the question might have been expected to provoke! It is worthy of the deep attention of the Germans. MILMAN has said something on the subject in his Bampton Lectures.

It is much more to be regretted that the Gospel of St. John has hitherto met with no commentator capable of doing justice to the inestimable value of that most evangelical of all the books of the New Testament. Critics seem to exhaust their powers on the three first Evangelists, and to give up St. John in despair. Yet it is there that the very spirit of the gospel is embodied. TITMANN'S Meletemata Sacra is the only book that enters with any degree of fulness into the doctrinal spirit of this gospel; and, with all its excellencies, it is far too neological, and too little embued with that manly and scholar-like spirit of criticism, which would certainly have been infused into such a work by the best of our own divines. A separate commentary on this book would have been worthy of the matured intellect and ample theological stores of the late Principal of King's College, the lamented H. J. Rose; it is worthy of the author of the History of the Reformation, the Rev. I. J. BLUNT.

ance can be hoped for, or required. With respect to the Old Testament evidence, which supplies innumerables instances of strictly verbal inspiration, we must again content ourselves with observing, that the argument derived from thence may be carried on with undiminished force to the New; and shall, in reference to it, refer but to a single passage-"all scripture is given by inspiration of God." Now when we call to mind that the Greek word here used, is one of singular and most apt construction—divinely breathed; and that reference seems therein to be distinctly made to the injection, as it were, of the divine and life-giving word, as animal and mental life was originally injected, from the same source, into the hitherto insensate clay which composed the living man; we can hardly hesitate to allow that the "scripture" here alluded to, which must embrace at least the whole of the Old Testament, was conveyed full-formed and perfect, and not merely in the snape of substantial and undeveloped suggestions, into the minds of those who were commissioned to utter or to record it. But perhaps it will be sufficient to refer to our text alone—especially directing your attention to the passage as it stands in the original—as being a portion of scripture, which, to every unprejudiced mind, must be at once decisive of the question. we have received," says St. Paul—in the phrase including all his brethren,—" Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."4 Here we find distinctly ascribed to the Spirit, not only the knowledge of divine things, but the words also in which that knowledge was embodied. And if, when he spoke, doubtless when he wrote also, St. Paul might safely adopt the words of our Saviour's promise-" It is not ye that speak; but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you."5

On a question like this, the testimony of the early Fathers is not only a matter of curiosity, but of the utmost value; because it is a question on which, even if Scripture had been silent, from their knowledge of the impression under which that Scripture was at first received, they may safely be pronounced to be altogether competent judges; and it is satisfactory to find, that, as far as they treat on the sub-

⁴ Dr. Henderson has attempted to soften the force of the apparently obvious meaning of this passage, by shewing that the apostle is not referring to "single terms" but "the entire character of the style." How the character of the whole can be affected, and not that of the parts, is not very clear; it seems but a timid mode of sliding, by the use of a phrase, out of an obvious difficulty. Page 408, &c.

5 Matt. x. 20.

ject at all, they appear to be almost unanimous in favour of the verbal inspiration of Scripture; and agree in sentiment with the decisive language of Origen—"There is not one jot or one tittle, written in the Scripture, which, to those who know how to estimate the force of words, does not work its own work."5 To this testimony we may add that of Hooker. Athenagoras had said, respecting the Inspiration of the Prophets, that "the Spirit of God moved their mouths like instruments, making use of them as a musician does of his flute;" and Hooker, after quoting the words of our text, adds-"This is that which the prophets mean by those books written full within and without; which books were so often delivered them to eat; not because God fed them with ink and paper, but to teach us, that so oft as he employed them in this heavenly work, they neither spake nor wrote any word of their own, but uttered syllable by syllable as the spirit put it into their mouths, no otherwise than the harp or the lute doth give a sound according to the discretion of his hands that holdeth and striketh it with skill, &c." Erasmus ⁶ Origen, Philocal. Cap. ii.

⁷ Hooker, two sermons upon part of St. Jude. We find also in Hooker, Book I. § 13, the following passage on this subject: "After the lives of men were shortened, means more durable" (than tradition) "to preserve the laws of God from oblivion and corruption grew in use, not without precise direction from God himself.

indeed seems to have been the first to dispute the primitive doctrine on this subject, in which he was afterwards followed by Luther; but both became soon perplexed with the inconsistencies in which their theories involved them, and appear to have partially reverted to the ancient system. From that time, views more or less strict have been entertained on the subject, from an unnecessary and superstitious reverence for points and particles, down to those lax notions which would bring the authority of Scripture to the same level with an ordinary history. The theory now maintained, of substantial verbal inspiration, is doubtless liable to objections,—the most weighty of which it may be necessary briefly to notice.

In the first place: It is said, that the various styles of thought and expression, and the different degrees of purity of language, which are clearly

First, therefore, of Moses it is said, that he wrote all the words of God; not by his own private motion and devise: for God taketh this act to himself, I have written. Furthermore, were not the Prophets following, commanded also to do the like? Unto the holy Evangelist St. John, how often express charge is given, Scribe, write these things? Concerning the rest of our Lord's disciples, the words of St. Augustine are, Quicquid ille de suis factis et dictis nos legere voluit, hoc scribendum illis tanquam suis manibus imperavit." See also Pearson on the Creed. Art. I. "In like manner the succeeding Prophets were the instruments of Divine Revelation, which they first believed as revealed to them,

observable in the works of the several authors of the New Testament, are a proof that they were left to express the sentiment suggested by the Holy Spirit in their own manner; it being supposed that solecisms in composition are inconsistent with the doctrine of verbal Inspiration. No one who considers the force of these two propositions,—that the Holy Ghost does nothing in vain,—and that that language is always the best which is most intelligible to the reader,—will attach much weight to an objection, which savours more of sophistry than of and then the people as revealed by them: for what they delivered was not the testimony of man, but the testimony of God delivered by man. It was he who spake by the mouth of his holy Prophets which have been since the world began: the mouth, the instrument, the articulation was theirs; but the words were God's. The spirit of the Lord spake by me, saith David, and his word was in my tongue. It was the word of the Lord which he spake by the hand of Moses, and by the hand of Ahijah the Prophet. The hand the general instrument of man, the mouth the particular instrument of speech, both attributed to the Prophets as merely instrumental in their prophecies. The words which Balaam's ass spake were as much the ass's words, as those which Balaam spake were his; for the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth; and not only so, but a bridle with that word —only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. The Prophets, as they did not frame the notions or conceptions themselves of those truths which they delivered from God, so did they not loosen their own tongues of their own instinct, or upon their own motion, but as moved, impelled, and acted upon by God."

sound reason. It was not the object of the Holy Ghost to supply the world with a model of purity in composition, (which, after all, is rather a question of conventional taste than of strict demonstration), but to enable each teacher of the gospel to address Greek or Barbarian alike in his own tongue in which he was born. The language of Demosthenes would have been as unintelligible to their audience, as it would have been incapable of expressing the new combinations of thought and feeling which the gospel introduced into the world. All we contend for is, that in whatever tongue a divine author wrote, whether in his own native dialect, or in a language communicated from heaven, he was so far guided by the Holy Spirit, as to be directed to the use of such expressions as could not possibly misrepresent his meaning. If we look at the list of nations who are represented to have heard their own tongues spoken on the day of Pentecost, we shall probably be led to conclude that some of the gifts then vouchsafed, consisted rather in variety of deeply corrupted dialects, than in radically distinct languages.

The next objection is of a more formidable nature; and rests upon a fact concerning which there has been much learned controversy.⁸ We

⁸ See some sensible remarks on this subject by Dr. NARES, the late Archdeacon of Stafford.

refer to the differing accounts which are recorded by different writers of the same transaction. These, it is said, while they do not affect the general fidelity of the statement, are inconsistent with the theory of verbal Inspiration. We may reply, that, when they occur in the record of what was said, they are equally inconsistent with accuracy; for the truth, in that case, can be but one. When, however, these differences are minutely examined, they will, in general, be found to be such as do not affect our proposition; which does not exclude the use of terms perfectly synonymous—or the change, either by omission or addition, of some circumstance which was important to the object of one writer and not to another—or a variation in case or tense, which the structure of a sentence might render necessary. Differences like these, and they are the main differences, prove nothing against the theory that each writer was guided, as to substantial verbal accuracy, by the Holy Spirit of God. With respect to the differences,-minute, indeed, but still obvious differences,—which exist in the reports which three of the evangelists often give of the same discourse of our Lord, and which prove that they cannot all be verbally correct—the best answer seems to be that none of them could by possibility be so. The language which our Saviour spoke was not Greek, but Syro-Chaldaic; the gospel accounts, therefore, are necessarily but translations; and, viewing them in this light, it would seem that, instead of stumbling at their minute discrepancies, we ought to trace a higher power than merely human knowledge and care, in their most wonderful agreement! When have any other translations, made independently of each other, agreed to the same extent?

In the third, and last place, it is asserted, that the theory of verbal inspiration is invalidated by the fact of the existence of various readings in the original Scriptures: an objection which can weigh only with those who maintain that no truth can be deteriorated or lost, and that God would continue miraculously to uphold what he had once seen fit miraculously to reveal. But we cannot be surprised if the negligence or perversity of former generations should, in this case, as in many others from the Fall downwards, be visited upon their posterities; nor do we see the advantage that the existing authority of Scripture would derive from the clearest proof that they were never more perfect than at present. The relics of what is supremely excellent are more valuable than original mediocrity. But it is a consolation to know, that the various readings which have accumulated through intentional corruption, or careless transcription, are seldom of such a nature as to affect one important doctrine of faith or practice.

Though, on theological questions, we are not always justified in deducing the truth of a doctrine from the supposed advantages arising out of it, because of the reality of these advantages we are, not unfrequently, incompetent judges; yet, when a doctrine has once been established on independent evidence, we are at full liberty to corroborate that evidence by inquiring into the benefits which arise from such a view of it: because we know that benefits always do arise out of the establishment of the truth. It cannot be denied, then, that the mind derives a degree of comfort and assurance from contemplating the word of God as being the product of substantial verbal Inspiration, which is seriously impaired by any lower view of the subject. Those who have studied doctrinal questions most attentively, are the most deeply conscious, that many of them, and those of essential importance, depend upon the use of a single word, and are often affected by the arrangement of a sentence, or the turn of a phrase. The necessary implication of the doctrine of Trinity in Unity, in the first verse of Genesis; and in the prescribed form of baptismin the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost-rests entirely upon the peculiarity of expression. Those passages in the Gospel of St. John which testify to the divinity and pre-existence of Christ (and that Gospel is full of them) derive

their force, in most cases, either from the word employed, or the method of employing it. The doctrine of the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, rests mainly upon the use of a pregnant word. And, in truth, almost the whole controversy as to the question of relative value between the authorized version of the Scriptures, and the (so called) improved version of the Unitarians—depends upon whether we are bound to adhere strictly to what the writers of the New Testament did say, or are at liberty to interpret them according to what we suppose they meant to say. Luther himself was compelled materially to

8 See Pearson on the Creed, Art. viii.

9 "In the present age, we are proud of our philosophy, and we encourage it so much as to make it sometimes run out into luxuriance; to reduce and prune luxuriant shoots, is certainly to improve :- indeed Christians in all ages, especially those who have prided themselves on any opinions, have made too free with Scriptures; and many parts of the Canon have been rejected, at different times, because they were, or seemed, contrary to certain favourite pre-conceived notions. The Manicheans had an abhorrence of matter, and therefore all parts of Scripture, which mentioned the uses of matter, were rejected as spurious; the whole Old Testament was cut off at one stroke; our modern philosophers are prodigious friends of matter, and therefore Scripture must be construed so that even the soul may be material. To set aside whole books of Scripture seems something more gross than to interpret; yet, if we set aside the genuine sense, we may as well set aside words too; for, deprived of their right sense, words must

modify his somewhat lax notions on the subject of verbal inspiration, when he entered upon the great controversy of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and found it necessary (as it doubtless is) to advocate the Inspiration of the very words of the Institution. It would be tedious to enumerate all the cases in which the expression employed is of

either be useless, or mislead.—But we have a *new* way of lessening the force of Scriptures, which do not favour us; instead of treating books as *spurious*, we diminish the degree of *Inspiration*.—A sacred writer, we say, might be biassed by his *prejudices*; he might be mistaken! we must not in *all* cases trust too implicitly! &c.

Surely, when our adversaries go these lengths, they do not perceive, that they are in reality confirming those doctrines, which they confess themselves unable to overthrow, without measures which take away the whole matter in dispute. All that we affirm is, that, supposing the Scriptures, as we have them, to be divinely inspired, so that every thing in them is truth, such and such doctrines are contained in them:—the moment that our adversaries change any part of this supposition, there is no longer any question between us.—Dean Allix, in the Preface to his Book already quoted, speaking of the Socinians, says, that their divisions occasioned their want of success; and those divisions, he says, 'will unavoidably follow, till they can agree in unanimously rejecting the authority of Scripture.'-The Book was published in 1699, and whoever compares the event with the prediction, will be struck with the sagacity of the Author." (HEY'S Lectures on Divinity, vol. 2, pp. 262, 263.) To shew how fairly this most candid of all controversialists treats his opponents, let me quote the following passage, treating, likewise, on the Socinian heresy. "If the utmost consequence to the argument. Nor is there one of those divines who limit the extent of Inspiration to the office of guarding the sacred writers against substantial error in matters of doctrine, who is not often driven to regard the very words of Scripture as being strictly controlled at least, if not suggested, by the Holy Spirit.

With respect to an argument against the notion of a verbal Inspiration of Scripture, that "its tendency is to sink the authority of faithful translations, by depriving them of all claim to that

I may speak frankly, the truth of the matter seems to be this; the Trinitarians have formed their doctrine in one way, and the Anti-trinitarians in another: the Trinitarians have collected their doctrine from Scripture only; the Anti-trinitarians, disgusted with the difficulties attending that method, or with abuses of it, and hoping to soften and moderate what appeared to them harsh and uncouth, have set out from notions of common sense, reason, natural religion; and, taking for granted, that Scripture, if rightly interpreted, must coincide with these, have interpreted it by bringing it as near to them as possible. I should imagine, from their writings, that they themselves would own this, but, if any of them disown it, nothing more can be said. However, I will refer to a few authorities, and then observe, that this is not simple, gennine interpretation; that, though it be true in theory, that Reason and Scripture coincide, yet in practice we are not to take for granted, that our present reason is perfectly right reason; (experience is against that;) and supposing God to inform us of any thing, it probably would be something, which our reason would be unlikely soon to find out." pp. 264-5.

quality;"10 we may remark, in the first place, that such tendency does not appear; and secondly, that if it did, it would seem to have little weight against the direct arguments on which the view we have taken seems to be founded. A translation, made by uninspired men, never can have the authority, because it cannot accurately represent the meaning, of the original; but its value does not seem to be lessened (except, indeed, by comparison) by how much the more the document of which it is a translation is elevated in accuracy above that of an ordinary record. The fact should form an addi-

10 Henderson, p. 433. In this work of Dr. Henderson, which was published as one of a series of "Congregational Lectures," the reader will find all the learning on this subject collected with praiseworthy industry; but if he expects results proportioned to the effort, in new or clear deductions from these premises, he will, I fear, be grievously disappointed. No new light seems to be thrown on any disputed point; indeed such points are all carefully avoided,—or timidly handled, and determined with cautious orthodoxy. This is characteristic of the mode in which dissenters are too often found to treat learned topics: they seem afraid to commit themselves to any opinions about which a reasonable doubt may be entertained. Dr. Pye Smith's book on the Scripture Testimony to the Messiah is another instance of the same kind. There is the array of learning, but it is not used with a master's hand. It would seem as if freedom from the shackles of Creeds and Formularies gave less liberty to the mind than might have been expected. Men without the control system advance like men in the darkafraid of obstacles because they see none!

tional reason for most attentively studying the original, but none whatever for undervaluing translations in the abstract.¹¹

Finally, we would guard against a misconstruction to which the doctrine we are advocating may be liable, and which, sometimes put upon the language of Scripture by those who entertain less definite notions as to the extent of its Inspiration, has often led practically to very injurious results. The error we allude to, is that of supposing that the words of Scripture, simply as being so, convey a meaning, and exert an influence on the mind, beyond the same words when used by an ordinary writer; as if they possessed within themselves a certain magical power in addition to their simple signification, and could still work miracles, like those by whom they were first composed. This is

Parry, and adopted with terms of strong commendation by Bishop Tomline, in his Elements, "That the Apostles were under the infallible guidance of the Spirit of Truth, as to every religious sentiment which they taught mankind, was calculated to open the door to great and most dangerous laxity of interpretation. It will not, in truth, bear a moment's investigation. Religious sentiment is a convenient phrase, but nothing more. Infallibility must extend to the words employed, or it cannot justly be assigned to the meaning of them. Horbery's three excellent sermons on this subject are well worthy the reader's attention, especially the sermon "on the guilt and danger of taking away from the Words of Scripture."

the language, not of reason or Scripture, but of superstition and fanaticism. The Scriptures, now, differ in nothing from the ordinary language of truth. They are subject to the same rules of interpretation, and are open to the same abuses from ignorance or mistake, as merely human compositions. It is through the Holy Spirit, indeed, that they will be enabled to make us wise unto Salvation—but that Holy Spirit is not resident in them, but must be sought for, in the use of the Scriptures as of every other means,—through diligent study, unshaken faith, and fervent prayer. May, then, that "blessed Lord, who hath caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them; that by patience and comfort of his Holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which he hath given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ."12

12 Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent.

END OF LECTURE III.



LECTURE IV.

CREEDS.

THE ARGUMENT.

SCRIPTURE A COMPLETE RULE OF FAITH AND LIFE-DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE REFORMED AND ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES ON THIS POINT-THE LATTER MAINTAINS TRADITION TO BE CO-ORDINATE WITH SCRIPTURE-TRUE SENSE OF THE WORD TRADITION-TESTIMONY OF TRADITION TO THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE AS A RULE-NECESSITY FOR SCRIPTURE INTERPRETATION CONSIDERED - WHERE IT SHOULD RESIDE-WHY THE NEW TESTAMENT MORE ESPECIALLY REQUIRES IT-HENCE NECESSITY OF CREEDS-WHAT POINTS A CREED SHOULD EMBRACE-TESTS OF THE VALIDITY OF CREEDS-DISSENTING TESTS-ROMISH TESTS-THE INCONSISTENCY OF ROMANISTS IN MAIN-TAINING ANCIENT TRADITION ALONG WITH MODERN INFALLIBILITY-DIFFERENCE ON THIS POINT BETWEEN THE ROMISH AND ANGLICAN CHURCHES-PROCESS SKETCHED, BY WHICH AN HONEST INQUIRER MAY ARRIVE AT THE TRUTH WITH REGARD TO ESSENTIALS-CREEDS THE INFALLIBLE TRADITIONS OF THE CHURCH-VAN MILDERT QUOTED, TO SHEW THAT THE SUBSTANTIAL TRUTH HAS EVER BEEN HELD BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH-VALUE OF CREEDS SUMMARILY STATED-THE DAMNATORY CLAUSES IN THE ATHANASIAN CREED EXPLAINED AND JUSTIFIED.



LECTURE IV.

CREEDS.

Acts, viii. 30, 31.

And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the *prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?

Having, as we would hope, already established the plenary Authority and plenary Inspiration of the New Testament as well as the Old, we are now provided with a full, perfect, and sufficient rule, both of Faith and Life. We are justified in asserting this of Scripture, at least as it was originally revealed; because we cannot for a moment believe that the Almighty would take such extraordinary means to make his will known to mankind, and at the same time leave his revelation defective either in its contents or its evidence. We may therefore, in this stage of our discussion, adopt the language of our Church, as at least reasonable, and having all the appearance of truth: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that

whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." On this point, indeed, as is well known, arises the essential difference between the primitive and reformed Churches on the one hand, and the Roman Catholic Church on the other; the latter asserting Tradition to be a rule of at least co-ordinate authority with Scripture, while the former confine it to what they maintain to be its only legitimate offices, those of witness and interpreter. This question we cannot now discuss; but we may observe, that there is an ambiguity in the use of the term Tradition, which may of itself have led to some of those confused and often extravagant notions which are sometimes entertained with regard to its office. Tradition, then, merely signifies a mode of evidence; and therefore, of itself, can be no rule or law whatever.2 It is a term used to express the manner by which we become certified of particular truths. Tradition, in this sense of the word, is perhaps the most general of all the channels through which knowledge is conveyed to us. Many things we learn through the senses-many by reason and reflection-but most (and indeed every thing not contemporaneous with ourselves) by tradition. In

¹ Art. 6. ² See appendix, at the end of this Lecture.

this sense, the Scriptures themselves are a tradition, and it is only on the unbroken and universal testimony of this tradition to their inspiration and authority, that we yield to them that obedience and respect which all investigation proves that they have a right to claim; and could the same weight of evidence be produced for other facts and doctrines not contained in Scripture, we should readily accord to them the same implicit credit. It is not simply as being contained in certain books that we accept them, but because the books them-

³ "I grant, at the first preaching and publishing of the Gospel, certain barbarous nations that received the faith of Christ had neither books nor letters; yet were they not therefore ignorant, or left at large to believe they knew not what. They had then certain officers in the Church, which were called Catechista, whose duty was, continually and at all times, to teach the principles of the faith, not by book, but by mouth. Of these mention is made in the Acts of the Apostles, in the Council of Nice, and elsewhere. This office bare Origen, that ancient learned Father. This doctrine Dionysius calleth, 'Oracles, or instructions given from GoD;' and saith, 'they passed from one to another, not by writing but by mouth,' ' from mind to mind.' Neither did these traditions contain any secret or privy instructions, or inventions of men, as it is imagined by some, but the very self-same doctrine that was contained written in the Scriptures of God. And, in this sort, the Gospel itself and the whole religion of Christ was called a tradition. So Tertullian (De præs. adv. Hæret.) calleth the articles of the faith, 'an old tradition.' So the faith of the Holy Trinity in the Council of Constantinople (Concil. Const. 6) is called 'a tradition." - Jewel, Reply to Harding's " Answer to the Defence." Art. XV.

selves are shewn to be inspired and authentic by a strength of testimony which is sought for, in other cases, in vain.⁴ Tradition itself is the very evidence on which we convict what are called Traditions of defective authority. When we find the early Fathers themselves pointing out these books, and these alone, as being the word of God—when we find them enforcing no doctrines or duties except what are contained in, or may be fairly deduced from these books,—why should we ascribe to these writers an authority which they disclaim, and reject that their evidence against themselves which we accept, and on which alone we rest, in favour of Scripture?⁵

- ⁴ After this was written, I was struck with the following confirmatory passage in Hooker: "We do not reject them (Traditions) only because they are not in Scripture, but because they are neither in Scripture, nor can otherwise sufficiently by any reason be proved to be of God. That which is of God, and may evidently be proved to be so, we deny not that it hath, in his kind, although unwritten, yet the self-same force and authority with the written laws of God."—Hooker, B. 1, 14.
- ⁵ To this sufficiency of Scripture as a rule of faith, all the Fathers without a single exception bear witness. It would be the extremity of folly, therefore, to set the evidence of the Fathers against the Scriptures, because it is on their evidence that we acknowledge the sufficiency of Scripture, and are enabled to distinguish the authentic from the spurious. It would waste the reader's time to quote their testimony seriatim. He may consult Tertullian, or Bishop Kaye's

To the Scriptures then we refer as the sole authority of every rule either of doctrine or duty; because Tradition has handed them down to us in that especial capacity. It testifies to their having been esteemed, from the first, as books sui generis, written by inspired men for the use

admirable abstract of his works; Origen, in Jerem. Hom. i. 7.; St. Cyprian, Testimonia, passim; St. Optatus; Cyril of Jerusalem; who all concur in the language of Athanasius: "What inconceivable abandonment of mind is this, which leads you to speak what is not in Scripture, and to entertain thoughts foreign to godliness?" But though we thus deny that any traditions are of tantamount authority with Scripture, yet using the term in that its legitimate sense which we have before ascribed to it, as a mode of evidence, some of the most important doctrines of Christianity are traditional. What is the testimony for Episcopacy but tradition? What for Infant Baptism but tradition? What is our evidence as to which books are, and which are not, canonical Scripture, but tradition? All these essential questions depend, for their irrefragible evidence, on the transmissive testimony regarding them, which one generation has handed down to another, from the days of the Apostles to our own times. It is evidence stronger, if it be possible, than a distinct command of scripture; "circumstances," like these, "cannot lie." "It is said," says Jeremy Taylor, "that the Scripture itself is wholly derived to us by tradition, and therefore, besides Scripture, tradition is necessary to the Church. And, indeed, no man who understands this question, denies it. This tradition, that these books were written by the Apostles, and were delivered by the Apostles to the Churches as the Word of God, relies principally upon tradition universal, that is, it was witnessed to be true by all the Christian world at their first being so consigned. Now and guidance of the Church, and preserved by that Church in their substantial integrity to the present time.

But then comes the more complex question as to the *interpretation* of this rule—the extent to

then this is no part of the word of God, but the notification or manner of conveying the word of God-the instrument of its delivery. So that the tradition concerning the Scriptures being extrinsical to Scripture, is also extrinsical to the question. This tradition cannot be an objection against the sufficiency of Scripture to salvation, but must go before the question. For no man inquires "whether the Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation?" unless he believe that there are Scriptures; that these are they, and that they are the word of God. All this comes to us by tradition, that is, by universal, undeniable testimony. After the Scriptures are thus received, there has risen another question, viz. whether or no these Scriptures so delivered to us, do contain all the word of God?" or, whether or no besides the tradition which goes before Scripture, (which is an instrumental tradition only of Scripture,) there be not also something else that is necessary to salvation consigned by Tradition as well as the Scripture; and of things as necessary or useful as what is contained in Scripture, and that is equally the word of God, as Scripture is? The tradition of Scripture we receive, but of nothing else but what is in Scripture. And if it be asked, why we receive one, and not the rest? we answer, because we have but one tradition of things necessary; that is, there is a universal tradition of Scripture and what concerns it, but none of other things which are not in Scripture. And there is no necessity we should have any, all things necessary and profitable to the salvation of all men being plainly contained in the Scriptures."—Dissuasive from Popery.

which it is necessary to be understood, and the authority to which men ought to bow in every case of unavoidable ignorance or reasonable doubt. That Scripture requires to be interpreted, no man denies; that a knowledge of certain elementary principles of it is necessary for every individual Christian, is equally evident; and that there must be some authority in the Church, either collectively or residing in detached portions or in single members of it, for determining the sense of Scripture, at least to such an extent as to take away the sin of wilful ignorance from those who rely on such authority-will be conceded by all who consider the mode in which the gospel was originally propagated, and the evils which would arise to the Church from the unlimited license of private interpretation. The Scriptures were not the instruments by which the gospel was at first disseminated. They are rather an account of the way in which those instruments operated. They were not originally written for the purpose of making converts to the truth, but to confirm or correct those who had been converted already. They are an inspired comment upon a previously-delivered rule;—that rule is now lost, and we are driven to collect it from the infallible comment that remains. In this respect there is an essential difference between the Old Testament and the New. The Old Testament

is strictly a Law, and requires no comment in the first instance; that is, though the details of it may be obscure, yet its great and elementary principles are almost self-evident. Every precept is as an article of the Creed; every prescribed ceremony is as binding as a Sacrament. But the Law of the New Testament presents itself to us under a totally different aspect; it is conveyed to us rather in an historical than a legal form; and to say we embrace the books of the gospel, implies an altogether different mental process from that which is required to say we embrace the books of the Law of Moses. The latter conveys a definite and simple notion, and we see at once what must be the belief and practice of him who makes the declaration; but the former is a much more comprehensive and indefinite expression; and may be uttered, and that with the utmost sincerity, by men who, beyond the fact of embracing the same gospel, have very little in common with each other, either in their ceremonies or their creed. We have only to look at the great variety of sects and opinions which have prevailed in the Church during successive periods of it, to be convinced that a simple declaration of belief in Scripture is no pledge of orthodoxy or bond of unity; but is compatible with the rejection, through the various and conflicting sentiments of those who nevertheless honestly

make such declaration, of every important doctrine and every essential duty that the whole Bible contains! Hence that necessity for some more definite confession of faith than that of a simple belief in the Scriptures, which Churches, of every variety of opinion, have always required as a test of qualification for Church-membership; hence, in short, the necessary origin of Creeds.

Something like a Creed was required by Philip of the Ethiopian before baptism: "What," saith he, "doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip answered, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest;"6 and a Creed may be defined to be a baptismal confession of faith. It should contain just so many and no more points of doctrine than are necessary for admission into the Christian covenant, and are a proof that the catechumen is neither ignorant of any fundamental truth, nor maintains any essential and insurmountable error. It should contain so many,—for fear he should on further inquiry see reason to fall back; it should contain no more,for baptism is but the commencement and not the conclusion of the Christian career. The convert cannot reasonably be excluded from the benefits of the Christian covenant till he is fully instructed in all the mysteries of the Christian faith; these are to be the study, and mental and moral probation,

⁶ Acts, viii. 36, 37.

of his whole Christian life; and there are many which the angels themselves desire to look into, and to which the most enlightened and spiritual disciple of Christ can never hope, in this world, to attain. And yet, on the other hand, there must be some knowledge on which his faith must rest, and by which his confession of it must be manifested to the Church to be placed on a sound foundation. This is his Creed. And the comparative excellence of one branch of the Catholic Church above another may almost be said to turn upon the Scriptural evidence and Apostolical authority on which that Creed is framed. Modern Churches (so called) have constructed for themselves various tests of Church-membership in accordance with the views which they take of what they esteem the most important doctrines of Christianity; some led by the influence of great names in theology; such, for instance, as, merging their Catholicity in a more modern name, adopt the cognomen of their founder as a symbol of their Creed-Calvinists, Lutherans, Wesleyans, &c.; some satisfied with very general terms of acquiescence; such as the various sects of Independents; and some adopting new views into their system of divinity as they would in moral philosophy or natural science. The Romanist seems to add to the evils which arise from these uncertain tests one pecu-

liar to himself: he seeks to combine, in his Creed. the principle of perpetual stability with that of perpetual change. He maintains the doctrine of fixed and unchangeable Tradition; but joins with it that of the infallibility of his Church; by which any new interpretation of Tradition or of Scripture, issuing according to canonical form, becomes as valid as, or supercedes, the original rule, according as it is an addition to or an alteration of that which already existed. This is a perplexity which embarrasses the Romanist at every step. He is unwilling either to give up the principle of fixed Tradition, or to withdraw the claim of plenary authority from any co-existent section of his infallible Church.7 The comparatively modern decrees of the Council of Trent are with him as binding as the Apostolical Traditions of the primitive Fathers: they may differ from, or even be inconsistent with each other, but his simple duty is out of two immutable and infallible things to deduce grounds of consistency in them, or at least of acquiescence for himself. The doctrine of Tradition alone, as a rule, would bind up the powers of the Church for ever; the doctrine of Infallibility alone, would throw it open to the unlimited tyranny and caprice of successive popes and councils: but

⁷ Vide "Petri Dens Theologia," Tom. II. p. 126. "De infallibilitate Ecclesiæ," et p. 158. "De infallibilitate Summi Pontificis."

the union of both places it under the rule of two conflicting and inconsistent authorities—Tradition without certainty of evidence, and Infallibility without unity of decision. Either power alone might be intelligible as a rule; but in whatever cases it is found necessary to call in the aid of both, the result must be a collision in which the authority of both is endangered.

In what precise respects, then, does the Church Catholic differ from the Church of Rome in its views of Tradition and of Infallibility? In one sense it may be said to hold both doctrines; and how does it escape the dilemma above detailed as attaching to the maintenance of both in an unlimited sense?—By maintaining the authority of both in that modified degree which reconciles them with each other, and with every sound deduction both from reason and revelation. Perhaps the shortest and clearest view of such a comprehensive subject is best supplied by an illustration. Let us place ourselves, for a moment, in the position of an original inquirer after truth, with the Scriptures for the first time open before him. He finds himself at once in the condition of the Ethiopian in the text; and in answer to Philip's question, "understandest thou what thou readest?"—will doubtless reply, "how can I, except some one should guide me?" I feel, he would say, that I

am involved, as it were, in a labyrinth of truth. There are more winding mazes of it in this sacred book, than I can ever thread in the course of the closest application and the most lengthened life; yet are there also, I feel, some truths so striking and so all-important, that to be ignorant of them must be hazardous, and to pervert them fatal, to my everlasting salvation. Who then shall guide me? I find that in the Church there was once an infallible interpreter: the Apostles had power given them unerringly to expound as well as to reveal. And I find also this solemn promise given to them, when they were finally sent forth to found and propagate the visible Church of Christ—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."8 It would seem, therefore, as if the gift of unerring interpretation were still somewhere alive in the world. But where is it to be found? I dare not trust to myself, for I know too well my own weakness to rely, on a question involving such momentous interests, solely on my own judgment. I fear to rely on the opinion of others, even though wiser and more learned than myself; for though their decisions may fortify or shake my own, they

⁶ Matt. xxviii. 20. "Since the promise extends to the end of the world, and the apostles were not to live so long, Christ is to be supposed to have addressed, in the persons of the apostles, their successors in that office." Bull, Defensio Fidei Nicæn. Proæm. S 2.

can shew me no Scripture token that this promise of infallibility attaches to themselves. I dare not depend on prevalent opinions, for they change; nor on whole Churches, for they differ. I am resolved what to do, in order that I may, if possible, be certified of those essential truths which Scripture seems to intimate will never be suffered to perish out of the Catholic Church of Christ. I will take the elementary doctrines of the Church of my own age and country, and sift them to their foundation. If there are any, which seem to have sprung up at a particular period, and were totally unknown before, I shall suspect them, if not in their truth, at least in their character of essentials. If there are any which have been held by one branch of the Catholic Church, but not acknowledged, or denied by another, I shall suspect them. If there are any which can boast both of universality and antiquity, but seem not to have been entertained, or to have been contradicted, by those who listened to the infallible expositions of the apostles or their personal disciples, I shall still suspect them. And lastly, if, having all these requisites, they cannot be proved by, or can be proved to be inconsistent with, the written Word. I shall not only suspect, but repudiate and disown them as doctrines generally necessary to salvation. But if, going steadily through this process, I find

certain doctrines, now promulgated by the Church as fundamental, to have been maintained by her as holding that character, through all her leading branches, and every successive age of her existence, up to the times of the apostles themselves⁹—if, moreover, I find it proved that the apostles taught these doctrines to their hearers, and have also either distinctly recorded or necessarily implied them in their now existing writings—then I have the utmost assurance of having arrived at an inter-

9" Knowing that God did so fully approve what was done by the Apostles, for the regulation of the Church, that they were even permitted to join, as it were, their authority to his, saying It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us; (Acts xv. 28.) our Reformers could not but acknowledge, that whatever had been thus decreed would be binding for ever upon the Christian Church; and 'consequently, that any wilful departure from such ordinances would be schism. Proceeding upon this principle therefore, they excluded all novelty; and leaving no latitude to human fancy, they confined all their enquiries to this point alone, namely, "How was it in the beginning?" To ascertain this they applied to Scripture; and as from the nature of things there were some points on which Scripture was silent, in these deficiencies they enquired what was the practice of those Churches, which were confessedly established under the eye, or during the life-time of the Apostles. This was done; and as these Churches thus founded would of necessity become the model upon which all that were subsequent should be framed, it was argued, that those particulars, in which these succeeding Churches agreed with their prototypes, might be safely considered as conformable to the Apostolical design.

It seems not possible, that at that distance of time they could

pretation which, if infallibility be vouchsafed to the world, may safely be pronounced to be infallible; and may feel a confidence, which no other process and no other principles can justly inspire—that these are the doctrines through which the Lord will be with his Church "alway, even unto the end of the world."—It is thus that Tradition and Infallibility are reconciled, by becoming almost identical with each other. Infallibility is thus

have ascertained by any other mode, what it had seemed good to the Apostles, and to the Holy Ghost, to appoint: and as this method led them step by step to the Episcopal form of government, we should think ourselves guilty of schism, did we not make that form the foundation whereon to build our Church. That such was the conduct of our great Reformers, and such the principles that influenced them, will surely be evident to all, who study, with the attention it deserves, the history of our Church. See Bp. Hall's Episcopacy by Divine Right, and the Preface to Bilson's Perpetual Government of Christ's Church: and Juelli Apol. apud Ench. Theol. vi. p. 199. The following testimony of a foreigner, eminent for his learning and abilities, and of a communion differing from ours, must be considered as of great weight. Isaac Casaubon having spent some time in England, writes thus to Salmasius: ' Quod si me conjectura non fallit, totius Refermationis pars integerrima est in Anglia, ubi cum studio veritatis viget studium antiquitatis: quam certi homines dum spernunt in laqueos se induunt, unde sine mendacio postea exuere se nequeunt: ita hostibus veritatis non solum risus præbetur, sed etiam partes illorum mirifice confirmantur. Nemo seriò versatus in antiquitate hoc verum esse negaverit. Sed multos amor partium cogit mentiri." Epis. I. Casauboni ad Salmasium, Ed. Grævii, 1656. Ep. 709. p. 898.— See Nott's Bampton Lectures, p. 123.

limited to a tradition founded on Scripture, and prevalent, all along, every where, and in every branch of the Catholic Church of Christ. No new decree, therefore, of the Church concerning fundamental points of doctrine, can be binding. It would necessarily be wanting in some of the requisites above specified. In this way the new fundamentals of the Council of Trent lose their validity, failing sometimes in one and sometimes in all of the conditions, of continuity, universality, and scriptural basis. We, however, of the Anglican Church, agree with the Catholic Church of Christ in maintaining that such doctrines as are absolutely necessary, as baptismal tests, are those which are contained in the ancient Creeds. There are other truths,

10 "Now if more were necessary than the articles of the Creed, I demand why was it made the characteristic note of a Christian from a heretic, or a Jew, or an infidel? or to what purpose was it composed? or if this was intended as sufficient, did the Apostles, or those Churches which they founded, know any thing else to be necessary? If they did not, then either nothing more is necessary, (I speak of matters of mere belief), or they did not know all the will of the Lord, and so were unfit dispensers of the mysteries of the kingdom; or if they did know more was necessary, and yet would not insert it, they did an act of public notice, and consigned it to all ages of the Church, to no purpose, unless to beguile credulous people, by making them believe their faith was sufficient, having tried it by that touchstone apostolical, when there was no such matter.

But; if this was sufficient to bring men to heaven then, why not

equally certain, and equally, perhaps, essential; but these are compendious forms handed down by the Church as infallible and necessary verities, indispensable for the Unity of the Church, and guarded for its use, as we believe, by the especial care of the Spirit of Truth himself. And it is indeed consoling and encouraging to the Church to observe, that, amidst the prevalence of error of every kind, and trials and tribulations which have often seemed to shake her bulwarks to the very foundation—it is consoling to observe with what care her main truths have been constantly guarded from corruption, or oblivion. The Creeds have floated like an ark

now? If the Apostles admitted all to their communion that believed this Creed, why shall we exclude any that preserve the same entire? Why is not our faith of these articles of as much efficacy for bringing us to heaven, as it was in the Churches apostolical, who had guides more infallible, that might, without error, have taught them superstructures enough, if they had been necessary? And so they did; but that they did not insert them into the Creed, when they might have done it with as much certainty as these articles, makes it clear to my understanding, that other things were not necessary, but these were; that whatever profit and advantages might come from other articles, yet these were sufficient, and however certain persons might accidentally be obliged to believe much more, yet this was the one and only foundation of faith, upon which all persons were to build their hopes of heaven; this was, therefore, necessary to be taught to all, because of necessity to be believed by all: so that, although other persons might commit a delinquency 'in genere morum,' if they did not know,

upon the waves, when every thing else, order, and ceremonies, and sacraments, and even the Word of God itself, have been tossed in wild confusion around them. No substantial error has ever been generally embraced by the universal Church, nor any essential truth totally forgotten by her, from the days of the Apostles to the present time. On this point I cannot forbear to quote the memorable words of a Father in our Church—the brightest and steadiest light of an age that is now passing away—the late learned Bishop of Durham:

"If," says he, "a candid investigation be made of the points generally agreed upon by the Church

or did not believe much more, because they were obliged to further disquisitions in order to other ends, yet none of these who held the creed entire, could perish for want of necessary faith, though possibly he might for supine negligence, or affected ignorance, or some other fault which had influence upon his opinions, and his understanding, he having a new supervening obligation, 'ex accidente,' to know and believe more." JEREMY TAYLOR—The Liberty of Prophesying. Sect. I. § 9, 10.

On this point the reader may also consult the Preface to Pearson on the Creed. So also Archbishop Bramhall: "We keep ourselves to the old faith of the whole Christian world, that is, the Creed of the Apostles—explicated by the Nicene, Constantinopolitan, Ephesine, and Chalcedonian Fathers; the same which was professed by them of old at their baptism, and is still professed by us at our baptism; the same wherein all the Christian world, and themselves among the rest, were baptized." Schism Güarded. Tom. I. Disc. IV.

Universal, it will probably be found, that at no period of its history has any fundamental or essential truth of the Gospel been authoritatively disowned. Particular Churches may have added many superstitious observances and many erroneous tenets, to these essential truths; and in every Church, particular individuals, or congregations of individuals, may have tainted large portions of the Christian community with pestilential heresies. But as far as the Church Catholic can be deemed responsible, the substance of sound doctrine still remains undestroyed at least, if not unimpaired. Let us take, for instance, those articles of faith which have already been shewn to be essential to the Christian Covenant—the doctrines of the Trinity, of our Lord's Divinity and Incarnation, of his Atonement and Intercession, of our Sanctification by the Holy Spirit, of the terms of acceptance, and the Ordinances of the Christian Sacraments and Priesthood. At what period of the Church have these doctrines, or either of them, been by any public act disowned or called in question? We are speaking now, it will be recollected, of what, in the language of Ecclesiastical History, is emphatically called THE CHURCH; that which has from age to age borne rule, upon the ground of its pretensions to Apostolical Succession. And to this our inquiry is necessarily restricted. But

view now, on the other hand, the labours of those who endeavoured to subvert any of these fundamental truths. Observe the parties with whom they originated, and the estimation in which they were holden. No age of the Church has ever · been entirely free from attempts to spread pernicious errors. Yet at what period have they ever received its authoritative sanction? Did the Church in primitive times yield one iota of essential doctrine to the Gnostic Heretics? Did it afterwards adopt either the Sabellian, the Arian, or the Macedonian tenets? Did the wild enthusiasm of Manes, or Montanus, and their followers, in any respect influence its Creed? And in later times, when and where have the Socinian notions been recognized as any legitimate authority? Or, what proof can even the disciples of Calvin produce, that his doctrine of arbitrary and irrespective decrees, was ever the received persuasion of the Catholic Church?—To say nothing of the multitude of lesser divisions of religious opinion, or of those ephemeral productions, of each of which, as of their authors. it might be said, 'in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth.' Surely here is something to arrest reflection; something which they who sincerely profess Christianity, and are tenacious of the inviolability of its doctrines, must contemplate with

sentiments of awe and veneration. How have they withstood the assaults of continued opponents; opponents, wanting neither talents nor inclination to effect their overthrow? If these considerations be deemed insufficient, let the adversary point out by what sure tokens we shall discover any Christian community, duly answering the apostle's description, that it is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone?"

We possess, then, in our primitive Creeds, a treasure beyond all price. We have in them those elementary and fundamental truths of the Gospel, which have, all along, been pre-requisites for admission into the Christian covenant by the Sacrament of Baptism. We find these truths promulgated by the apostles themselves, borne witness to by the testimony of uninterrupted tradition, and confirmed by the decision of councils, the blood of martyrs, and the sure warrant of Scripture. Can we wonder, then, that the Churches' formula of severe condemnation, a formula of Scripture origin, should be attached to the wilful rejection of such doctrines as have been thus propagated, thus evidenced, and thus believed? "Go ye forth," says our Saviour to his Apostles, "go ye forth into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that be-

¹¹ Bp. Van Mildert's Bampton Lectures, viii.

103 CREEDS. lieveth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." But what was that which "not believing" should bring on them this awful sentence? It could not be the written Word of God; for much of it was not as yet recorded. It must have been the doctrines which the Apostles taught as being requisite for Christian baptism. Now of these we know that the most abstruse of all which the Creed contains, the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, was one-for the Apostles were commanded to baptize every convert in the name—(not names)—of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. But they would not baptize men into HIS name in whom they had not believed: and yet says our Lord, in most general and emphatic words, "he that believeth not, shall be damned." If then we find, in one of our Creeds, this Scriptural sentence attached to this especial sin of disowning the doctrine of the

Trinity—if, also, we find it declared to be necessary to everlasting Salvation that we believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ--in conformity with St. John's own sentence on the same

sin, "many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; this is a deceiver and an anti-christ;"12—if the Church, on this sacred authority, should judicially

¹² ii. John, 7.

attach such penalties as these to the rejection of those articles of faith which are contained in her Creeds, it seems to amount to no more than the solemn assertion of this necessary truth: there is such a thing as saving faith; there is such a thing as damning error: These are the truths which the Church Catholic has all along maintained as apostolical, scriptural, and essential verities; nor can she discover how Christian Salvation can be extended to those who do not acknowledge the fundamentals of the Christian faith. She concludes, therefore, not in the language of uncharitableness, but of judicial duty, that "this is the Catholic faith; which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved!"

END OF LECTURE IV.

APPENDIX TO LECTURE IV.

It is curious to observe how much confusion of thought, and therefore unnecessary controversy, has arisen from overlooking the distinction between the two widely different senses in which the word Tradition is often popularly used. It is sometimes a mode of evidence, and sometimes the thing evidenced; (sometimes tradendi modus, sometimes traditum.) In the first sense, with reference to theological matters, it is invaluable; in the second, unless the thing evidenced be shown to have originally issued from Inspiration, it is of no value whatever. Yet the confusion of these two meanings is commonly found not only in the same author, but even in the same passage. The following is a striking instance taken from a scarce work, written by Dr. Deacon, the last Non-juring Bishop, (though his consecration seems to have been thought by his sect to have been somewhat irregular), who was a strong Jacobite in the year 1745, and lived and died in Manchester. The title of his work, which exhibits great learning and considerable powers of reasoning, is as follows: "The Doctrine of the Church of Rome concerning Purgatory proved to be contrary to Catholic Tradition, and inconsistent with the necessary Duty of Praying for the Dead, as practised in the Ancient Church." It is well known that this "necessary duty" was one of the points on which the Non-jurors maintained that the Reformers had departed from Catholic truth. The passage referred to is this: "But to all this it is opposed," says he, "that we have too great regard for Tradition. To which I answer, that a Tradition, which is general and uninterrupted, delivered or practised by all Churches and contradicted by none, must be followed. By such Tradition we prove the lawfulness of Infant Baptism, the observation of the Lord's day, and the divine right of Episcopacy. By such Tradition we repel the attacks of the Church of Rome, and shew the necessity of a Reformation. In fine, if we will not submit to the authority of such Tradition, we may turn Deists, deny that there is any revealed religion, and then burn our Bibles. For the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures cannot be proved but by Tradition. How can it be shewed, that Solomon's Song is Canonical, and Ecclesiasticus not so, but by Tradition? How can it be proved, that St. Matthew and St. Mark wrote the Gospels which go under their names, but by Tradition? And how shall we distinguish between the genuine and spurious works of the Apostles, but by Tradition? 'The Scripture cannot prove itself; and therefore without Tradition our Bible is of no authority, our faith, our hope, nay our whole religion is vain.

But after all, Scripture itself recommends Tradition. St. Paul writes thus to St. Timothy: Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me. And in the next chapter he says: The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Where we find, that St. Timothy was not only himself to observe the things he had heard from St.

Paul, but he was likewise to deliver the same to faithful men, that they might teach others; and we may be confident St. Paul expected, that they who were taught by those faithful men, should take eare to perform what was delivered to them. Again, the same Apostle writes thus to the Thessalonians: Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the Traditions, which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle. And in the next chapter he says: Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother, that walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us. And to the Corinthians he writes: Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. Where we are to observe, that the word which is here translated ordinances, in the original signifies traditions, it being the same word in the Greek with that which is translated tradition in the texts just before quoted; And accordingly in the margin of the English Bible over against the word ordinances there is written in another character or traditions.

Thus we see we have Scripture on our side when we argue for Tradition, the enemies to which do not only overthrow the foundation of revealed religion itself, but go directly contrary to the very letter of their Bibles."

Now the reader will at once perceive that the word Tradition is here used,—and clearly without the writer himself perceiving the transition,—in its two distinct senses above defined. In the first part of the passage it bears its

1 "The reader who is desirous of seeing more upon this subject, is referred to the very Reverend and Learned Dr. Brett's unanswerable tract upon Tradition."

proper signification of a mode of evidence, but in the second, when he quotes the epistles to Timothy, the Thessalonians, &c., it is used with reference to the thing concerning which testimony is borne by Tradition. The first is the legitimate, the second the spurious sense of the word. In the first meaning it is invaluable; in the second, unless we trace up the Tradition to scripture itself, or to a principle which may be proved by Scripture, it is valueless in a doctrinal point of view. To illustrate this distinction by a pertinent example.—Jeremy Taylor, in his most interesting Life of Christ, has the following passage, (vol ii. p. 129, Heber's edition): "Then he arose, and took the young child and his mother, by night, and departed into Egypt. And they made their first abode in Hermopolis, in the country of Thebais; whither when they first arrived, the child Jesus, being by design or providence carried into a temple, all the statues of the idol-gods fell down, like Dagon at the presence of the ark, and suffered their timely and just dissolution and dishonour, according to the prophecy of Isaiah: 'Behold, the Lord shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence,' (Isaiah xix. I.)" Now the authority on which Taylor asserts this fact is, to say the least of it, equal to that of Livy, or indeed of any other historian on whose evidence we do not hesitate, on common questions, to rely. Nay it is the very authority on which, through one important stage of its transmission, we depend for our knowledge that the Canon of Scripture which we now possess is the same as was committed to writing by the Apostles and Evangelists: for Taylor's references for his statement arc to Eusebius de Demonstr. c. 20. S. Athanas, lib. de Incarnat. Verbi. Palladius in Vita S. Apollon. Nor does there appear to be any antecedent

improbability against its truth, arising from information gathered from any other source. The Scripture account of the same transaction is (Matt. ii. 14, 15.)-" He departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." No one acquainted with the force of Scripture phraseology, supposes that the reason here assigned for the departure into Egypt excludes other and even higher motives than the single one assigned by the Evangelist, or is inconsistent with the transaction referred to by Taylor as having also led to the fulfilment of another prophecy, to which it might not, perhaps, answer St. Matthew's immediate purpose to allude. Here, then, is a tradition as a fact, handed down to us by tradition as to the mode. We receive the Scripture narrative and that of Taylor's, on much the same external evidence; and, up to a certain point, with almost equal weight of authority. But Taylor's story stops short of Inspiration; tradition, the mode of evidence—does not carry this tradition to that point. It may be equally true, but it is not equally binding, with the other narrative; and while I should hold the man an infidel who denied the truth of the one account, I should bring no moral charge whatever (however strongly convinced of it I might be in my own mind) against him who rejected the other. I would say with St. Augustine, (Contra Faustum.) "Quia canonicum non est, non me constringit." Bishop Pearson insists on the perpetual Virginity of the Mother of our Lord, as proved by tradition; but this is

² This doctrine was also maintained by Bishop Bull, "she remained for ever a virgin, as the Catholic Church hath always held and maintained." Serm. IV. It was also held by Jeremy Taylor; Life of Christ, Sec. 3.

not made, by our Church, an article of Faith "necessary to Salvation." The following cautious remarks of the learned Professor Hey, on the subject of Traditions, in the sense of tradita, which occur in his comment on the sixth article of our Church, are well worth the attentive consideration of the reader. "Whatever particular Traditions we may think it right to set aside, it does not seem as if we ought to entertain any general prejudice against every thing that is unwritten. In times of simplicity and unimproved ignorance, all knowledge and all laws must be unwritten, or traditional; and in every state of literature, there must be some bye laws, some particular methods of obeying general rules, which cannot well be committed to writing; and which had better be left unwritten and changeable; there will also be respectable interpretations of what has been written, and eustomary practices implying unwritten regulations; -- sometimes we only collect previous regulations from their present presumed effects. - This is applicable to Christianity. For some considerable time, there were comparatively very few written records in the Christian Church; during that time, a good deal must go on Tradition. If we had any verbal directions, which had been really given, by Christ or his Apostles, to the newly-formed Churches, we should value them very highly; these indeed seem advantages not to be expected in any degree; but very early customs and practices in such Churches, afford so strong a presumption of their having been owing to such directions, as to demand our highest respect. And writings of Fathers and decrees of Councils are to be considered in the same light; that is, as conveying an evidence of something unwritten: early comments also are esteemed as

telling us received interpretations. All these ought to have weight, whenever there is no appearance of *indirect* motives; and when the persons, whose accounts we receive, were competently qualified to inform us.

But, whenever we have any reason to distrust, we should be at full liberty to neglect every thing of this kind; which is a very different thing from its being held "necessary to salvation." And herein consists the happiness of us reformed Christians, that we have got rid at once of an enormous quantity of such Tradition, as we could not but believe to be corrupt. In a course of years, there will generally be a good deal to be rejected; but, if there have been ignorance and superstition and interest to generate, and artifice, party zeal, ambition, and enthusiasm to nourish, there is no saying to what degree the corruption may have increased. At our Reformation, it was high time to extirpate all that diseased tumor, which had been formed; the same notices are still to be examined as at first, and the same respect to be paid to whatever appears to be credible evidence; but now we are not afraid of examining freely; be our minds ever so improved, we can make use of all their powers, to judge of the past, and provide for the future.

Yet, when we say, that we can do this, we must not forget the distinction between those, who are qualified to judge for themselves, and those, who ought to be guided, in a good measure, by the judgment of others; between Philosophers, as we have called them, and People. Indeed, the distinction is never more wanted than here; for all imperfect reasonings with regard to Traditions seem, on both sides, to owe their imperfections to the want of it. Those, who are against all Traditions, reason as if all men were

Philosophers: those, who plead most strongly for Traditions, reason as if all men were ordinary people." Vol. ii. 468, 469.

It may be necessary, however, to remind the reader, that the great controversy between ourselves and the Church of Rome regarding tradition (a fact which is now sometimes lost sight of) has reference to neither of the above senses of the word, but to the force and weight of oral or unwritten Tradition; that is, a Tradition that cannot be written, but is written in the hearts of the authorized interpreters of the truth, for the purpose of enabling them to correct the necessary imperfections of any written word. It was the maintenance of this mystical doctrine that opened the widest door to the spiritual domination of the Romish priesthood. For a full discussion of the question of oral Tradition, though with far too much laxity of view on the part of the Archbishop, see Tillotson on "The Rule of Faith," especially Sect. 2. vol. X. works.

³ Vid. Petri Dens Theologia. Tom. 2. p. 108.

LECTURE V.

ARTICLES OF RELIGION.

THE ARGUMENT.

DIFFICULTIES OF THE SUBJECT-APPARENT SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES WITH THE CREEDS, AS RULE AND SYMBOL-ADDITIONS MADE TO THEM BY THE CHURCH OF ROME-THE ENCROACHMENTS OF THAT CHURCH ON ONE SIDE LED TO REMONSTRANCES ON THE OTHER -HENCE ARTICLES OF RELIGION-DISTINCTION BETWEEN CREEDS AND ARTICLES-CREEDS UNIVERSAL, ARTICLES SPECIAL-ARTICLES DEVISED FOR SELF-REGULATION AND SELF-DEFENCE OF PARTICULAR CHURCHES-AUTHORITY OF EACH BRANCH OF THE CHURCH TO ORDAIN ARTICLES-IT IS IN THE ARTICLES THAT WE ARE PROTESTANTS AGAINST BOTH ROMANISTS AND DISSENTERS-SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLES TO SHOW THIS-DEFENCE OF OUR ARTICLES AGAINST THE ROMANISTS AS NOT BEING CATHOLIC-DEFENCE OF THEM AGAINST DISSENTERS AS BEING EXCLUSIVE-TRUE SENSE OF THE WORD PROTESTANT-WHY OUR ARTI-CLES ARE NOT SIGNED BY ALL-WHY THEY SHOULD BE SIGNED BY SOME-USE OF THEM IN PROTECTING THE CHURCH FROM HERESY AND ERROR.



LECTURE V.

4 7 . 7

ARTICLES OF RELIGION.

Hebrews vi. 1, 2, 3.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.

We are now arrived at a stage in our inquiries, in which our path becomes less distinct as we advance, from the numerous ways which diverge from it. We have ascertained the plenary Authority and Inspiration of Scripture; and have attempted to fix those elementary and fundamental principles of the interpretation of it, which have received the sanction and impress of the whole Catholic Church, and out of which, if they are really based on a sound foundation, all minor details of doctrine and duty ought to spring. It does not appear—had that spirit of unity and of peace, which our great Head and Master so solemnly bequeathed to his

Church, been permitted to have its perfect workthat more than this would have been necessary to make the flock of Christ one fold under one shepherd, and render the Church militant on earth, in its outward piety and internal peace, an emblem and an earnest of the happy condition of the Church triumphant in heaven. For, there are the Scriptures,—an unexhausted well of Truth; there are the Creeds, vessels to draw with—sufficiently simple, in their elementary meaning, to be understood by every candidate for admission into the Christian household; sufficiently comprehensive, in their ultimate bearings, to give scope for the edification of that household in every mystery of doctrine, and refinement of practice, which it may require, in the Apostle's words, "to go on unto perfection." The Creeds are full of doctrine. them we profess our belief in God and his attributes; in Christ and his offices; in the Holy Ghost

"Since, then, the emperors made the summary of the Apostles' Creed to be the rule of discerning Catholics from heretics, it follows that the Roman Church Catholic signifies something else than it did in the Primitive Church. St. Ambrose says, 'Faith is conceived by the Apostles' Creed;' all faith lies in that, as the child in the mother's womb; and he compares it to a key, because 'by it the darknesses of the devil are unlocked, that the light of Christ may come upon us; and the hidden sins of conscience are opened that the manifest works of righteousness may shine. This key is to be shown to our brethren, that by this, as scholars of St.

and his influence;—in the Holy Catholic Church, and thereby in its unity, its ministers, its sacraments, its authority, its universal truths;—in the communion of saints—the common mind, union,

Peter, they may shut the gates of hell, and open the doors of heaven.' He also calls it, 'The seal of our heart, and the sacrament of our warfare.'-St. Jerome speaking of it, says, 'The symbol of our faith and hope, which was delivered by the Apostles, is not written in paper and ink, but in the fleshly tables of our hearts. After the confession of the Trinity, and unity of the Church, the whole, or every sacrament, of the Christian religion, is concluded with the resurrection of the flesh.' Which words are intimated, and in part transcribed by Isidore, of Seville. Ruffinus says, the Apostles being to separate, and go to their several charges, appointed 'Norman futuræ prædicationis, regulam dandam credentibus, unanimitatis et fidei suæ indicium;' 'The rule of what they were to preach to all the world, the measure for believers, the index of faith and unity; 'Not any speech, not so much as one, even of them that went before them in the faith, was admitted or heard by the Church.'- 'By this Creed the foldings of infidelity are loosed; by this, the gate of life is set open; by this, the glory of confession is shown. It is short in words, but great in sacraments. It confirms all men with the perfection of believing, with the desire of confessing, with the confidence of the resurrection. Whatsoever was prefigured in the patriarchs, whatsoever is declared in the Scriptures, whatsoever was foretold in the prophets, of God who was not begotten, of the Son of God, who is the only begotten of God, of the Holy Spirit, &c. 'Totum hoc breviter, juxta oraculum propheticum, symbolum in se continet confitendo:' So St. Austin-who also calls it, 'The fulness of them that believe.'-'It is the rule of faith, the short, the certain

interest and destiny, of all Christians;—in the forgiveness of sins—the fundamental benefit arising from the atonement, and the key to all the rest; in the resurrection of the body; out of which springs the responsibility of man for all his actions,

rule, which the Apostles comprehended in twelve sentences, that the believers might hold the Catholic unity, and convince the heretical pravity. The comprehension and perfection of our faith.'- 'The short and perfect confession of the Catholic symbol is consigned with so many sentences of the twelve Apostles, is so furnished with celestial ammunition—that all the opinions of the heretics may be cut off with that sword alone, said Pope Leo. I could add many more testimonies declaring the simplicity of the Christian faith, and the fulness and sufficiency of the Apostolical Creed. But I sum them up in the words of Rabanus Maurus: 'In the Apostles' Creed there are but few words, but it contains all religion' (omnia in eo continentur sacramenta): "for they were summarily gathered together from the whole Scriptures by the Apostles; that because many believers cannot read, or if they can, yet by their secular affairs are hindered that they do not read the Scriptures, retaining these in their hearts they may have enough of saving knowledge.

Now, then, since the whole Catholic Church of God in the primitive ages, having not only declared that all things necessary to salvation, are sufficiently contained in the plain places of Scripture; but that all, which the Apostles knew necessary, they gathered together in a symbol or form of confession, and esteemed the belief of this sufficient unto salvation; and that they required no more 'in credendis,' as of necessity to eternal life, but the simple belief of these articles: these things ought to remain in their own form and order."—Taylor, Vol. X. pp. 471, 472, 473.

and the relation of our humanity to another world; and in the life everlasting-which turns our thoughts to the anticipation of a judgment to come -to the hopes of everlasting happiness, and the terrors of eternal fire. What more than this would seem to be necessary as a bond of union among the disciples of the same Lord,—as principles so obvious as none could dispute-so comprehensive as none could despise? Surely the Church of Christ, thus built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, with their written word for its rule, and their undoubted practice for its interpretation, might have continued to build up its people in the knowledge and love of God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ; laying upon them no burdens which they were unable to bear-not making the heart of the righteous sad which the Lord had not made sad—but leaving room for the incurable diversities of individual opinion harmlessly to overflow out of the great stream of substantial truth. But these overflowings, by concentration, soon grew too powerful for the main current. Whole Churches became corrupted on fundamental points; and, by assuming to themselves an infallibility which could only belong to the Catholic Church of Christ, when giving its sanction to a doctrine universally acknowledged and based on the clear evidence of Scripture, attempted to impose on the whole body of Christians rules of

faith and practice alike disowned by reason, by antiquity, and the word of God.²

The Church of Rome had long maintained an irregular but still powerful authority over the Church of Christ, by shrouding its designs under the cloak of an undefined Catholicity; by issuing its doctrines and decrees rather as comments on acknowledged truths than as distinct and substantial innovations; and by enforcing, in detail, upon ignorant nations, injunctions whose enormity would at once have seemed intolerable in the aggregate. But when, at length, aroused by the loud protestations of those whom she had so long oppressed, she came forward in her own proper character, and that too in an age in some degree enlightened by literature, and rendered impatient of her rule by a long experience of religious tyranny and wrong; when, at the Council of Trent, she ventured to embody her dogmas and decrees in a tangible shape, and attempted to enforce them on the Catholic Church as equally binding with her ancient and universal creeds, which are sanctioned by the common consent of Christians, and based on the authority of Scripture;3 then it was that those who

^{2 &}quot;They do injury to faith, by creating new articles, and enjoining them as of necessity to Salvation."—Taylon's Dissuasive, Sect. 12.

^{3&}quot;In this decree (1546) it is testified that, the 'symbol of faith which the holy Roman Church' then used, 'the shield against all here-

had long helplessly groaned under the yoke of Rome awoke to a full sense of the horrors of their religious condition: they then saw revealed the chain which had so long invisibly bound them. They found themselves now entangled by a creed, not fixed by universal consent and grounded on the

sies, 'the firm and only foundation against which the gates of hell shall not prevail,' was that which to this day is used in the Church of England, without alteration or addition, the same (with the exception of the interpolation 'and the Son') which the holy Church, throughout all the world, has received and professed since A. D. 381.

Within twenty years after this testimony, did the Bishop of Rome put forth another Creed, containing points of doctrine, which not only never had a place in any former Creed, but against many of which the fathers of the Church collectively and individually have borne testimony: and that now is made the schismatical term of communion in that which was once a genuine branch of the Catholic and Apostolic Church.^a

The Council of Trent committed another act of schism, heresy, and impiety, by decreeing that those were to be accursed who did not receive certain unwritten traditions of the Romish Church, and also, with all their parts, the Books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Daniel, and two of Maccabees, the first and second;—thus admitting the History of Bel and the Dragon, the Story of Susannah, and the Song of the Three Children, &c., as sacred and canonical:^b and these books the most eminent fathers

^a Chrysostom, Homil. in Pentecost, edit. Benedict. vi. 233. Cyril of Alexandria de Sanct. Trinitate, Dial. iv. p. 310, and Hilary de Trinitat. lib. vi. c. 37, i. 169. Perceval on Schism, 156, 359, 360.

b Sess. 4. Conc. XIV., 746, 747. Vide list of Fathers thus accursed, Perceval on Schism, 420.

written word, but variable as the will and boundless as the power of a conclave that no law, either divine or human, could limit or control. The simple tie of a common faith could no longer bind together the several branches of the Church Catholic in unity and peace. Encroachments on the one side led to remonstrance on the other; and with the tendency of the dominant party to impose new rules of religion, grew the necessity for the weaker

of the Church, in all ages, had agreed to reject, as works establishing doctrinal points of faith.^c

The Council of Trent, A.D. 1547, was the first which enjoined by anothema the acknowledgment of seven Sacraments. By the first canon, it is decreed that, "If any shall say, that the Sacraments of the new law were not all instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, or that they are more or fewer than seven, to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Repentance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony; or that any of these seven is not truly and properly a sacrament: let him be accursed."

The sacrifice of the mass f according to the Church of Rome, was authorised at the Council of Trent s in 1562.

Canon I. If any shall say, that in the mass there is not offered

c Vide Art. VI. of the Church of England contra. IV. Conc. Chalcedon. Conc. I. 5007, contra.

d Conc. Trent, A. D. 1547, Sess. VII. Conc. XIV. 776, et vide etiam Dec.Sess. V. Conc. Trent, Bapt. Conc. XIV. 751, 752.

 $[^]e$ Vide Art. XXV. of the Church of England contra, et ctiam Art. IX. of the Church of England as to Baptism.

f The word "missa," or "mass," was originally a general name for every part of the divine service.

g Conc. Trent, A.D. 1562, Sess. XXII. Conc. XIV.

power to protest against each successive invasion of its Christian liberty. Hence the origin of Articles of Religion. They differ essentially from Articles of Belief, both in their contents and their object. Creeds contain no doctrines but such as are generally necessary for Salvation; Articles embrace some of which we might remain wholly

to God a true and proper sacrifice; or that the offering is nothing else than that Christ is given us to eat: let him be accursed.

Canon II. If any shall say, that by these words, 'Do this in remembrance of me,' Christ did not appoint his Apostles to be priests; or did not ordain that, they and other priests should offer his body and blood: let him be accursed.

Canon III. If any shall say, that the sacrifice of the mass is only a service of praise and thanksgiving, or a bare commemoration of the sacrifice made upon the cross, but not a propitionary offering; or that it is profitable to the receiver alone; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities: let him be accursed.

Canon IV. If any shall say, that by the sacrifice of the mass, blasphemy is offered to the most holy sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross, or that that is dishonoured by this: let him be accursed.⁴

Private or solitary mass was unknown in the early Church, i and the departure of the Roman Catholic Church was authorised at the Council of Trent, in 1562, under the following decree.

The holy synod could indeed wish, that in every mass, the faithful, who are present, should communicate not only in spiritual affection, but also in sacramental receiving of the eucharist, in order

 $[^]h$ Vide Art. XXXI. of the Church of England, contra.

i Bingham, vi. 721. 1 Short's Church Hist. 29.

ignorant without peril to our souls. Creeds contain assertions of positive truths; Articles are often

that they might more abundantly profit by this most holy sacrifice: but, if this may not always be, she does not therefore condemn those masses in which the priest alone sacramentally communicates, as if they were private and unlawful; but approves and commends them. For those masses also ought to be accounted common, partly, because in them, the people spiritually communicate, and partly because they are celebrated by the public minister of the Church, not for himself only, but for all the faithful who belong to the body of Christ.

Canon VIII. If any shall say, that the masses, in which the priest alone receives sacramental communion, are unlawful, and therefore to be abolished; let him be accursed "— Stephen's Introduction to De Lolme, Vol. I. pp. 218, 219, 220.

4 "Here a necessary distinction is to be remembered between Articles of Faith, and Articles of Doctrine: The one are held necessary to salvation, the other are only believed to be true; that is, to be revealed in the Scriptures, which is a sufficient ground for acknowledging them true. Articles of Faith are doctrines that are so necessary to salvation, that without believing them no man has a feederal right to the covenant of grace: These are not many, and in the establishment of any doctrine for such, it is necessary both to prove it clearly from Scripture, and to prove its being necessary to salvation, as a mean settled by the covenant of grace in order to it. We ought not indeed to hold communion with such as make doctrines that we believe not to be true, to pass for Articles of Faith; though we may hold communion with such as do think them true, without stamping so high an authority upon them.

j Sess. XXII. cap. 6, et Can. VIII. Conc. XIV. 852—856. Vide Art. XXXI. of the Church of England, *contra*. Et ctiam Rubric at the end of the Communion Service.

protestations against pernicious errors. Creeds are equally applicable to all times and countries; Articles often refer to circumstances of local concernment, or errors of temporary prevalence.⁵ Creeds

From this plain precedent we see what a difference we ought to make between the holding errors in doctrinal matters, and the imposing them as Articles of Faith. We may live in communion with those who hold errors of the one sort, but must not with those of the other. This also shows the tyranny of that Church, which has imposed the belief of every one of her doctrines on the consciences of her votaries, under the highest pains of Anathemas, and as Articles of Faith. But whatever those at Trent did, this Church very carefully avoided the laying that weight upon even those doctrines which she received as true; and therefore though she drew up a large form of doctrine; yet to all her lay-sons, this is only a standard of what she teaches, and the articles are to them only articles of Church-communion. The citations that are brought from those two great primates, Laud and Bramhall, go no further than this: They do not seem to relate to the clergy that subscribe them, but to the laity and body of the people. The people who do only join in communion with us, may well continue to do so, though they may not be fully satisfied with every proposition in them, unless they should think that they struck against any of the Articles or Foundations of Faith; and as those great men truly observe, there is a great difference to be observed in this particular between the imperious spirit of the Church of Rome, and the modest freedom which ours allows."-BURNET on the XXXIX Articles. Introduction.

5 "Certain doctrines may be true only under circumstances, or accidentally, or but expedient, or developements of the truth relatively to a given state of things; such as the duty of union of

bind together the whole Church—Articles a particular branch of it. The one consists of articles of faith, the other of religion; the one is the substance, the other the detail. The object of the one is to establish uniformity of belief; that of the other is "for the avoiding of Diversities of Opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true Religion." Hence it appears, that while Creeds seem necessary to the very existence of the Catholic Church as an exposition of common points of belief, and a public declaration on its part of the sense in which it understands the main doctrines of Revelation, Articles of Religion spring as necessarily out of its errors and corruptions; being protests of a certain branch of it against heretical opinions supposed to be entertained by others, or assertions of particular truths, in the maintenance of which such branch is, from peculiar circumstances, especially concerned. They form, in short, Articles of selfregulation and self-defence:-such rules as seem necessary to unite one portion of the Catholic Church in a common observance of ordinances, obedience to laws, and habits of daily intercourse;

Church and State: or they may be but protests against the errors of a particular day. Such are most of those doctrines in our Articles which go beyond the doctrines of the Creed."—Newman on Romanism and Popular Protestantism, p. 296.

⁶ Preface to Articles.

while they exclude such as, if introduced into the society of the Church, would necessarily bring with them confusion, disorder, and a breach of religious peace.⁷

Of the authority of each branch of the Church to form for itself such declaratory and defensive regulations, provided that in so doing it do not

7 "In considering the nature of the articles, we must guard equally against the opposite errors of supposing that none, or that all of them are matters of faith. The former error would involve a denial of the necessity of belief in some of the most holy doctrines of Revelation; for although the articles be human compositions, the doctrine itself which some of them convey is divine. For instance, the doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation, the sufferings, death, resurrection, atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, original sin, and other doctrines manifestly contained in the articles, are matters of faith, taught by Scripture, by the decrees of œcumenical synods, and by Catholic tradition, and which it would be heretical to dispute or deny. Therefore to assert that none of the articles contain matters of faith, would be pernicious and anti-christian.

On the other hand, if it were asserted, that all the doctrines of the articles are matters of faith, so that whoever held a different opinion in any point, is to be viewed as a heretic; we should not only be obliged to condemn rashly and uncharitably a large part of the christian world, but should be unsupported by the principles of the Church of England herself, and opposed to the sentiment of our theologians generally. The articles comprise not only doctrines of the faith, but theological and historical verities, and even pious and Catholic opinions.

It is historically and theologically true, that the particular Churches of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred in faith. It is theologically true, that the book of consecration of bishops,

infringe upon Scripture truth or Catholic prescription, we have abundant proof, both from reason, and the Word of God. Within these limitations, it is not only expedient, but necessary, that the Church of Christ, in each separate country of the world, should have "power to decree rites or cere-

priests, and deacons, contains all things necessary to a valid ordination; that the bishop of Rome has no jurisdiction in the realm of England; that the Homilies contain sound doctrine. All these are absolutely certain truths; but they are not properly Articles of Faith, necessary to salvation, because they all involve questions of fact and of human reasoning, which are not self-evident, and on which men may be divided, without doubting the doctrine of Revelation itself. E. q. If some members of Foreign Churches doubted whether the book of Homilies does in fact contain sound doctrine, through some mistake of its meaning in some point; and even supposed that it contradicts the revealed truth; this would be an error, not a heresy, because the revealed truth itself would be still believed. It would also be a scandalous error to deny that our bishops are validly consecrated, and one which the Church could not permit any of her members to advance; but if some persons over whom she had no jurisdiction, should for a time fall into this error, imagining, from want of sufficient information, that some essential rite was omitted in the English ordinations, there would indeed be every reason to lament their very injurious error, but not to esteem them absolutely heretics. In the same way we should not account the oriental Churches heretical in refusing to approve the expressions in our creeds of procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son as well as from the Father, because, through a mistake of fact, they suppose that these expressions interfere with the doctrine of one Principle in the ever-blessed Trinity."-Palmer's Treatise on the Church, Vol. ii. pp. 261, 262, 263.

monies, and authority in controversies of Faith."8 If it be a Christian duty, as it appears undoubtedly to be, that every disciple of Christ should submit peaceably to that form of civil government under which he may chance to live—if there be nothing in the rules of the Gospel which should prevent him from being an obedient subject under any system of authority which does not interfere with his religious liberty—then it is evident that some power must reside, either in the state under which the Church exists, or in the Church itself, or both combined, to enact such rules for the regulation of that Church, as may be for the mutual interest of both; and may form a pledge, on the one hand, that the Church will do nothing to the civil detriment of the state, and, on the other, that the state will make no encroachments on the religious privileges and prosperity of the Church. Again: if it should appear that any branch of the Church, through divisions within, or pressing assaults from without, may at any time be labouring under some imminent danger from a cause which, though intrinsically trivial, is yet, from circumstances, of the utmost import to its welfare, it cannot be doubted that such a posture of affairs would justify a measure in other respects perhaps inexpedient; and would

⁸ See this subject fully discussed, and illustrated with ample authorities from Scripture, and the most approved writers of the Church, in Palmer's Treatise on the Church, Vol. ii. pp. 264, 265.

authorise that to be enforced as an article of religion, which, in other Churches, or other times, might be left to be entertained as a matter of opinion. Of this kind seems to have been the decree which the Apostles sent to the Gentiles of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, respecting a certain line of conduct which they were to pursue out of regard to the opinions of the Jews which dwelt among them.9 This decree may be termed an article of religion, rather than a rule of faith; but it was not the less binding on their consciences to whom it was sent, so long as the necessity which called it forth continued; and inasmuch as it involved, like most of our own articles, a moral duty, binding to that extent, under all circumstances whatever. In truth the Apostle's formal precept, "that all things be done decently and in order"-extending the authority of the Church even to points of outward ceremony and form, necessarily implies its power in those weightier matters which involve the peace and edification, as well as order, of a whole Christian community.

It appears, then, that the proper notion of Articles of Religion is, that they are articles of self-regulation and self-defence; agreed upon by particular branches of the Catholic Church, in subordination to and in accordance with the spirit

⁹ See Acts xv. 23, &c.

of the Scriptures and the Creeds, for the purpose of guarding against errors, either of life or doctrine, with which such branches are locally endangered, -of protesting against the corruptions of other Churches,or of giving a pledge to the world as to the line of conduct which they propose to pursue with regard to human society, or civil governments. These are the offices which our own Articles of Religion seem designed to discharge. As believers in the Scriptures, we are Christians; as believers in the Creeds, we are Catholic; as holders of the Articles, we are Protestants. In them we protest against the errors, from whatever quarter arising, by which the Church, at the time of the Reformation, seemed especially to be endangered. These errors were, indeed, of the most opposite character and tendency; but, in the eyes of our judicious Reformers, equally hostile to religious unity and religious peace. And it is the glory—the undisputed glory of our Church, that however exasperated might justly have been her feelings by the religious oppression which she had so long endured under the yoke of Rome, and however alarmed by the wild and fanatical notions which too many of the reformed Churches were disposed to substitute for the superstitions that were passing away, she stood, in that hour of her trial, unshaken in her integrity, and unmoved from the strict line of truth and

charity either by her anger or her fears. 10 Whoever will read over her articles under that view in which we have attempted to present them, as articles of self-regulation and self-defence, will perceive with what consistency this character is adhered to, from the first of them to the last. He will see, probably, in every one of them, a great and substantial truth asserted; for the Church would not lightly convert that into an article of religion, which either was not in itself of essential value, or which did not in its denial involve the most serious results. besides a distinct declaration of the Church's doctrine, he will always observe the several modes of perverting or rejecting it so evidently denoted, as to shew that the main object of the Article was rather to guard against error, than simply to enunciate the truth. The Articles consist of propositions as to points of "consent," in three important departments of truth: the first refers to the notions we entertain with respect to the character of God and his revealed will; the second regards the nature and duties of man, considered as an individual; the third relates to his duties as a member of a Christian Church and a civil common-

¹⁰ For an illustration of this invaluable fact in the history of our Church, the popular reader may consult Blunt's History of the Reformation—an excellent little book, which every one should read, because every one can understand it.

wealth. And in each of these departments we find errors, both of superstition and laxity, pointed out with that clearness and force which can only spring from the most accurate knowledge of their origin, united with the bitterest experience of their fruits. The first section consists principally of a recapitulation of the main doctrines of the three Creeds, (those of the Trinity in Unity, and the Incarnation and Atonement of Christ being dwelt upon with an emphasis fatal to every shade of Socinian error,) and of the assertion of the great doctrine that the Holy Scriptures (specifying what is to be esteemed as Scripture) are sufficient for salvation,—thus laying the axe to the root of the fundamental corruptions of the Church of Rome. The second section, extending from the eighth to the eighteenth article, has reference to the present nature and condition of man, and his individual duties,—and here we find, in every article, not only a recondite religious truth asserted, but the errors on that point among the various reformed Churches, as well as the Church of Rome, exposed in language at once so scriptural and rational, as none of our adversaries have ever yet been able effectually to gainsay. Lastly, we have a series of articles on the character and authority of the Church,—on the offices of its ministers, the nature of its sacraments, and the modes of its teaching; and the whole concludes with certain declarations on the part of the Church as to the light in which it regards some civil duties—declarations which the state has a right to expect from those who propose to live under its protection and to co-operate with it in the general promotion of the public welfare.

From a cursory review like this, of the character and object of the Articles of the Church, it is evident that it was not the primary intention of those who framed them that they should be considered in the light of articles of faith, or articles of peace; but rather, as we have already ventured to designate them, articles of self-regulation and selfdefence. They abound, indeed, in points of faith; for it is essential to their object that nothing should so solemnly be insisted on that is not in itself of primary importance; but still they are here introduced as being points in which those errors are involved, which are the causes of disunion and heresy in the Church of Christ. They have only been imposed on future generations, because the past have proved them to be essential to Christian unity.

This view of the object which our articles were designed to answer, furnishes us with a reply to objections which have been alleged against us, as arising out of these articles, by two opposite classes of Christians. The Romanist says, that in adopt-

ing them, we have severed ourselves from the holy Catholic Church; that we have framed for our Church laws neither founded in Scripture, nor authorised by Tradition, nor sanctioned by the legitimate authorities of the universal Church; and that we have thus committed the very faults which we allege against them as the ground of our separation, without possessing or even affecting their pleas of having an infallible guidance in devising new rules, and plenary authority to enforce their observance. Our answer to this is obvious: that in no one respect which can justly be called Catholic, have we separated ourselves from the Primitive Church; nor (except inasmuch as they have deviated from primitive truth) even from the Church of Rome. That we hold the same Scriptures with themselves, so far as they can be proved to be the actual and genuine word of God; and that we maintain the same Creeds, as having the sanction of unbroken and universal Tradition, and being based on the authority of Scripture. That we hold the same Sacraments, as far as they can be shewn to be of divine institution, and to exhibit the true sacramental character. That we maintain the same orders of Priesthood, holding their office by virtue of an unbroken succession from the days of the Apostles; and that our Articles, so far from being substitutes for, or deviations from, these

Catholic truths, are simply our forms of protestation against deviations from them by others. It is because others have added to, or perverted the doctrines which are taught in the Scriptures, and were held by the Primitive Church, that we, reverting to these doctrines, have devised our present Articles, by which to distinguish those who hold the Catholic faith in its original purity, from those who have mixed it up with idolatrous forms and superstitious notions, at once tainting every branch of Gospel truth, both of faith and practice. Our Articles of Religion, instead of being a mark of our departure from Catholic antiquity, are the very proof to which we appeal of our determination to return to it.

The other and opposite objection, to which I before alluded, as being also grounded on the Articles, is alleged against us by various of the reformed Churches which have equally with ourselves protested against the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome. They represent that this common protestation is, or ought to be, the single and sufficient bond of union between them and ourselves—that the errors of the Romanists are of such magnitude as to throw all minor points of difference between their opponents into the shade, and that the common name of Protestant ought to be the sole watchword of Reformed Christianity,

uniting all sects and communities in their opposition to so dangerous a delusion. To this we reply, —that Protestants indeed we are, but simply in the sense and to the extent which our Articles proclaim us to be. That deep as we hold to be the corruption of the Church of Rome, there are other errors in the world if not so wide-spread, at least as dangerous, as those of which she is the origin; and against these we have protested with equal earnestness in the Articles to which we have subscribed. With all those to whom these Articles are no stumbling-block, we are prepared most sincerely and heartily to co-operate; but they bind us as much on the right hand as on the left; and we are no more justified in deviating from them on the side of laxity, than towards that of tyranny and superstition. If there be any sects who deny the Divinity of the Saviour, 11 or the Divinity and Personality of the Holy Ghost,12—if there be any who admit not the depravity of man,13 and the full efficacy of the atonement through the blood of Christ,14—if there be any who deny the validity of an episcopally-ordained ministry, 15 or the general necessity of the Christian Sacraments for salvation, 16_ if there be any who will not submit themselves to

¹¹Art. II. ¹²Art. V. ¹³Art. IX. ¹⁴Arts. II. XI. ¹⁵Art. XXXVI. ¹⁶Arts. XXV, XXVII. XXVIII.

the just authority of the Church, 17 or the supremacy of the throne,18-against all such we have, in our Articles, protested as strongly and as distinctly as against the errors, the opposite and equally dangerous errors, of the Church of Rome. It is in this extended sense that we are a protesting branch of the Catholic Church of Christ. We court no compromise from one side or from the other—we have nothing to retract or to disguise. We make this protest, as we maintain, in the full spirit of Christian charity, solely in self-defence, and for the establishment of religious truth; and we would receive into our community with the most heartfelt joy, any Christian brother, who, holding the verities of our primitive Creeds, sees nothing in our Articles so opposed to them or to the Word of God, as necessarily to prevent him from communicating with us in the offices of public devotion, or the charities of private intercourse.19

17Art. XX. 18Art. XXXVII.

Protestant being an appropriate designation, or otherwise, of the Church of England. The explanation of the term, as given above, seems to meet all the difficulties of the question, and to shew that though, as an abstract and independent title, it is an imperfect designation, yet with reference to the errors of Rome, and with reference also, in strictness of speech, to the doctrinal aberrations of the principal sects, it is a proper and significant denomination; though,

That our Articles of Religion are to be regarded rather in the light of an outward fence to the integrity of the Church, than as expositions of its substantial doctrines, is further proved by the fact that a public assent to their truth is not required from all the members of it. With regard to the Creeds the case is different. Every one admitted into the Church of Christ by baptism, is called upon publicly to confess his faith in the doctrines which they contain, either by his sponsors or in his own person. But none are required to subscribe to the Articles of Religion except such as, from their present or prospective official stations, or position in society, may have it in their power to influence those around them as to the opinions which they may imbibe on religious subjects. It has sometimes been thought an unnecessary strictness that all persons so circumstanced should be called upon thus to pledge themselves: but does not history teach us, that even this safeguard has sometimes been found too weak to exclude the wolf, even

from the circumstance that sectarians agree with us in entering their protest against the errors of Popery, the term has become a less distinct token of our protesting against their errors likewise, than it otherwise would have been. It is now, therefore, sometimes used by Dissenters to conceal their differences with ourselves, and so should be employed by us with that caution which the knowledge of such a possible perversion of it will suggest.

from the innermost fold of the Church?20 Do we not read of men who, having signed these Articles for the very purpose of obtaining places of power and profit in the Church, have exerted the influence, thus obtained, for the object of depreciating those doctrines of which they were the sworn defenders? These days, we may devoutly hope, are now gone by for ever: but the very fact that such things were,—and the additional consideration that the evil propensities of our nature are as indestructible as the evil origin from whence they spring, should render us cautious in hastily removing the bulwarks of our Zion, because the enemy may for the moment have disappeared from before the walls. If the doctrines comprised in our Articles of Religion be deemed essential to the Church's unity, purity, and peace, it cannot

²⁰ Let us call to mind the history of Archdeacon Blackburne, author of "the Confessional," and indeed of the whole of that calamitous period of the Church, when the most flagitious dereliction of principle seemed to be aimed at as the very beau ideal of a sworn defender of "the Established Church!" The Anglican Church has not yet recovered the shock which she sustained during that interlunar hour of her brightness; both in the seeds of evil then sown in her bosom, which time has not totally eradicated, and in the distrust, with which all honest minds were justly infected, of the purity of her ministers, and, through them, of her principles and doctrines! A sort of periodical Hoadleyism and Erastianism seems to be the very Cholera of the Church of Christ!

be thought unreasonable that all prudential steps should be taken to prevent their possible infringement. If there be any of them which in so far may be called antiquated, that the errors against which they protest may seem to have passed away, the retention of them is at least innocuous, and they may still stand as historical monuments of the varieties of human perverseness, and as warnings against the future recurrence of similar deviations from the truth. Should there be those, even in the bosom of the Church, who strongly object to some, or, it may be, the whole of these tests of orthodoxy, it seems not uncharitable in the Church rather to expect such to waive their own conscientious scruples, than that for their sakes the convictions of the main body of her community should be trifled with, and those bulwarks of her security prostrated, which in times past have been her towers of defence, and may possibly be found not unserviceable in the time to come. In nothing is a Christian spirit, especially in an intellectual age, more unequivocally evinced, than in submitting "to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." And a wise and pious and patriotic Christian, knowing how much human means, and those often of a personally distasteful character, are instrumental in the diffusion of Gospel truth, will stoop to the employment of secondary causes when they are not hostile to the word of God, and are in accordance with the institutions and the feelings of that people among which it may be his fortune to live. But when they are such as the articles of our Church are proved to be—scriptural in their subjects and language, and alike destructive of heretical notions, whether of superstitious or latitudinarian origin, he will cling to them as anchors of his Church, sure and steadfast, amid the "waves of this troublesome world;" and bless God that the wise and good of old have left us this record of their own trials and wanderings, to "guide our feet into the way of peace."

END OF LECTURE V.

LECTURE VI.

LITURGIES AND RITUALS.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE CONSIDERATION OF LITURGIES AND RITUALS FOLLOWS NATU-RALLY THAT OF SCRIPTURE, CREEDS, AND ARTICLES-THE EXPEDIENCY OF THEM NOT HERE SO MUCH THE SUBJECT OF INQUIRY AS THE NECESSITY-FIXED FORMS OF PRAYER A CONSTITUENT ELEMENT OF A VISIBLE CHURCH-VISIBILITY AND UNITY OF THE CHURCH PROVED-AN UNITED CHURCH REQUIRES AND PRE-SUPPOSES UNITED PRAYER -SCRIPTURE AUTHORITY FOR THIS SHEWN TO BE CONTAINED IN THE TEXT-EARLY DIVISIONS OF PUBLIC WORSHIP THE SAME AS NOW-PRAYER FOR PUBLIC AND NATIONAL BLESSINGS FORM A SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY FOR VISIBLE AND NATIONAL CHURCHES-THE CHURCH'S EARLY PRAYERS FOR AUTHORITIES PROPHETIC OF AUTHORITIES BECOMING ULTIMATELY FRIENDLY TO HER-THE WANT OF APOSTO LICAL LITURGIES NO PROOF THAT LITURGIES ARE NOT ESSENTIAL TO THE CHURCH-THE JEWS HAD A PRESCRIBED LITURGY-THAT LITURGY A MODEL FOR THE EARLY CHRISTIAN-THE FOUR PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN LITURGIES TRACED UP TO THE APOSTOLICAL AGE-AT THE REFORMA-TION THESE WERE RESTORED IN THEIR ORIGINAL PURITY-VISIBILITY AND PURITY OF A CHURCH MARKED BY ITS LITURGY-DANGER OF LEAVING PUBLIC WORSHIP TO PRIVATE DISCRETION-A NATIONAL CHURCH SHOULD HAVE A NATIONAL FORM OF PRAYER-EXCELLENCE OF OUR OWN LITURGY-IT CONSOLED OUR CONFESSORS AND MARTYRS IN THEIR TRIBULATIONS-JEREMY TAYLOR'S ELOQUENT PANEGYRIC UPON IT.



LECTURE VI.

LITURGIES AND RITUALS.

1 Timothy, ii. 1, 2.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

We have attempted, in previous Lectures, to trace the institutions of the visible Church of Christ, downwards from their source. We have examined into the Authority and Inspiration of Scripture, the import of Creeds, and the utility of Articles. We have seen how they flow naturally out of each other; we have ascertained the peculiar province of each, and the absolute necessity of all. Following this path onward, according to our proposed system of inquiry, we now come directly upon the question of Liturgies and Rituals; intending to include under these terms all prescribed forms of worship, whether simply for common prayer, or for the public administration of sacraments and ceremonies. That this is the place which the consideration of Liturgies

should occupy in any systematic discussion of Christian Institutes, is at once evident from the fact that prayer is a practical development and application of the doctrinal principles which Creeds and Articles are intended to define—as necessarily pre-supposing sound information on all points of faith and duty, as moral practice requires a previous understanding of the laws of morals. If that be no inapt definition, which has been given, of the nature of Prayer, viz: "That it is an offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will,"1 then is an accurate knowledge of that will an essential pre-requisite for the due performance of this religious duty. Now such a knowledge of his will can only be gathered out of Scripture; our views of Scripture being tested, and, as far as human means can avail,-guaranteed as to their accuracy, by their concurrence with the universal opinion of the Church throughout all ages. This opinion is expressed, as far as essentials are concerned, in the Creeds; and, as to more minute particulars, and with reference, also, to some local exigences of the Church, in the Articles of Religion. With these (and not without these) preliminary preparations, the Church of Christ is "throughly furnished" for Prayer: and hence we are brought

¹ Westminster Assembly of Divines.

directly to the consideration of common and fixed Forms of Prayer.

The abstract necessity for such forms is a preliminary inquiry; and is of deeper import than may appear on a hasty view. Much controversy has taken place (for it is an old question in the Church) as to the expediency of prescribed and publiclyauthorized forms of worship; and strong and eloquent reasons have been advanced, (though it must be confessed that neither the reasoning nor the eloquence have been on this-as indeed it is on few questions-confined to one side,) as to the advantages of carefully prepared and generally approved formulas of address to the Deity over invocations which are thrown off under the heat and zeal of the moment, and which are the immediate expression, therefore, of the mind of him alone from whose mouth they proceed. To this question of relative superiority we do not now confine ourselves. It has been discussed by Jeremy Taylor² with that mixture of solid reasoning and brilliant illustration, which, while they cannot but delight even an honest opponent, leave little to be sought for, in addition, by him who is already friendly to his view, unless it be the grave and judicious determination of the

² "An Apology for Authorized and Set Forms of Liturgy against the Pretence of the Spirit."—Works, vol. vii. Heber's edition.

argument, which has been pronounced by the venerable Hooker.³ We, however, propose to rest the question on another ground; and to shew that it is not a mere consideration of expediency or of utility whether our forms of worship be prescribed or otherwise; but that such prescription is an essential element in the visibility of the Church of Christ; and that, however men may differ as to the spirit and propriety of any outward form prescribed by a particular branch of the Catholic Church for the use of members in immediate communion with it, the necessity for such common and authorized rituals is a question altogether independent of such inquiries, and involves the very existence of the Church itself.

It will not be denied (nor is it ever controverted, as an abstract proposition, except by some small sections of professing Christians,) that visibility and unity are two essential characteristics of the Church of Christ.⁴ That they were conspicuously so of its prototype, the Jewish Church, is universally conceded; and hence we may at least conclude that there is nothing in the notion contrary to the will of God, or the nature of a Revelation. It was in the

³ Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V. § § 23-49.

⁴ For a full and scriptural discussion of the question concerning the Unity of the Church, the reader should consult Dr. Isaac Barrow's learned and claborate sermon on the subject —Works, vol. vi. p. 495, &c.

character of visibility that the future extension of the Church of Christ over all the world was predicted by Isaiah and by Daniel; "the mountain of the Lord's house (for the stone that smote the image was to become a great mountain) shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it."5 This figure was taken up by our Lord himself and applied to the Apostles, who then comprised the whole visible Church of God, and were the root out of which every future branch of it should spring: "Ye are the light of the world. A city which is set on a hill cannot be hid."6 And this visibility of the Church is implied in all the Epistles, evidenced by the concurrent testimony of the Fathers, and asserted in the Articles of the Church of England, as well as in most of the Confessions of the Reformed Churches abroad. And with regard to the unity of this visible Church,whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the essential elements of which such unity is composed, none who read the Scripture can deny, that to preserve it is one of the highest duties of a Christian, and wilfully to endanger it a sin which places the offender without the pale of Gospel promises. The figure under which our Saviour depicted the mutual relation that existed between himself

⁵ Isaiah, ii. 2. ⁶ Matt. v. 14.

and his disciples, and the joint relation of both to the Father, places this doctrine in the clearest possible light: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman: Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches."7 And St. Paul's figure, under which he more than once represents the Church of Christ, is not less decisive as to its visibility and unity than our Lord's own illustration of the vine: he draws his allegory from the close relation of the head to the members in the human frame. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."8 There can be no doubt, in truth, from the impression left

7 John xv. 1, 4, 5.

8 Romans, xii. 4, 5. See also I Cor. xii. The following are some judicious remarks of the learned Mede, on the question of the Continuous Visibility of the Church of Christ. "The observation therefore which this affords us is, That the true Church of Christ was never wholly extinguished, nor the light of the Gospel ever quite put out, no, not in the greatest darkness that ever was to overwhelm it. By the true Church of Christ I understand That holy Society and Company of Believers, which as they accord and are joined together in one common Faith of all Divine truths needful to Salvation, so are they also free from the fellowship of such enormous abominations and mortal

on the mind by the whole tenor of the phraseology of Scripture when speaking of the elementary constitution of the Church of Christ, that it was designed to follow the analogy of an earthly kingdom, both in its principles and its details; so that the mind was not to be distracted, and the natural current of human thought interrupted by being transferred from earthly to heavenly contempla-

errors as destroy and overturn it. This is that society whereof, by the grace of Almighty God, we glory to be the members; this that society which in the primitive times grew and flourished; this that society which (when the times foretold of the Church's Eclipse came, and the great Apostacy had overspread the face thereof) was indeed much impaired, endangered, and obscured, but never was totally extinguished, but continued even under the jurisdiction of the Man of sin, yea in Babylon itself, where he had his throne: for doth not Christ at length say, Apocal. xviii. 4. Come out of her my people! How could they come out thence, unless they had been there? or how should Antichrist sit in the Temple of God, 2 Thess. ii. 4. unless God's Temple were even there where Antichrist sate? as a few living embers in a heap of dying ashes; as a little wheat in a field overgrown with weeds; as the lights of the heaven in a firmament overcast with clouds; as a little pure gold in a great mass of dross and mixed metal: such was the faithful company of Christ in the apostate body of Christendom, the Virgin Church in the midst of Babylon, Apocal. xiv. 4.

"The question therefore is, Whether that holy society of believers before-mentioned, who accorded together in one Common Faith with us of all Divine Truths needful to Salvation, and kept themselves free from such enormous abominations and mortal errors, which we now disclaim as utterly annihilating that Common

tions; but rather that one was to typify and adumbrate the other—and the kingdoms of the world were to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ by as natural a process as the Law of Moses was expanded and purified into the Law of the Gospel. Hence the language applied to the reign of Christ—his glory—his kingdom—his people, is studiously imitated from that which is

Faith; whether such a society as this has been in all ages, joined and distinguished by such a common outside from other companies, either of men in general, or Christians in special; or in shorter, and perhaps plainer, terms thus, Whether the society of men of our Christian belief hath in all ages been for the outside a distinct ecclesiastical corporation from other societies of men?

"My answer is, That for the first ages it was so; not only thus visible, but easily discernible from all other societies of men whatsoever; but afterward, when the great apostacy we speak of surprised and deformed the beautiful spouse of Christ, then was not that virgin company of saints, our mother, a distinct external society from the rest of Christendom; but a part, yea and the only sound part, of that external and visible body whereof our adversaries boast their predecessors to have been members. For howsoever this our Virgin Mother, for the inward and invisible communion of her sincere and unstained faith, were a distinct and severed company from the rest with whom she lived; yet, for the common principles of the Christian faith still acknowledged in that corrupt body of Christendom, she retained communion with them, and for the most part of that time of darkness continued an external part of the same visible body with the rest in gross, called Christians; as being begotten by the same sacrament of Baptism (as the Israelites in the like case of Circumcision,) taught in some

usually applied to the circumstances of an earthly dominion. And those cannot be well mistaken, who, observing this peculiarity to run through the whole language both of the Old and New Testaments, look upon Christ's Church on earth, as a government heavenly indeed in its design, and spiritual in its motives, but having, in its outward form, and the relation of its several parts to each other, all the marks and characteristics of an earthly kingdoma governor and the governed-laws, and those who are to administer, as well as those who are to obey them-outward signs of citizenship -and common duties for its subjects, towards their Lord and towards each other, in their capacity of professed and acknowledged members of the same commonwealth. Amongst these duties, if this view of the Church be a just one, the part by the same Word and Pastors still continued amongst them, and submitting to the same jurisdiction and government, so far as these or any of these had yet some soundness remaining in them. But for the rest which was not compatible with her sincere and unstained faith, and which annihilated, in those it surprised, even those common grounds of Christianity otherwise outwardly professed; she with her children either wisely avoided all communion with it; or if they could not, then patiently suffered for their conscience sake under the hands of tyrants, called Christians; until that tyranny growing unsupportable, and that mortal contagion unavoidable, it pleased God, lest we might have been as Sodom and Gomorrha, to begin to call us thence at the time appointed unto a greater liberty, as we see this day."-See also Pearson, Art. "Catholic Church."

duty of common prayer must necessarily occupy a prominent position: so much so, as to be inseparable from the very idea of an united and visible Church, and to be as essential to its existence as ceremonics, creeds, and articles of faith.

We find, accordingly, that this necessity is denied by none, except by those who deny at the same time the visible unity of the Church of Christ. And in this they are doubtless consistent; for it would be impossible for those who maintain the total independence of one congregation upon another, or those who hold the unity of the Church to be true but in a mystical sense, to agree as to the necessity, or form, of a common Liturgy or Ritual. If every man's salvation be only a personal concern, his mode of seeking it must be a personal concern likewise. But the inconsistency is not less, on the other hand, in those who maintain, as an essential doctrine, the visibility and unity of the Church of Christ, and are yet indifferent as to the necessity of prescribed and authorized forms of public worship. It would be totally abhorrent from sound reason, and in direct opposition to that decency and order which pervade the whole scheme of revelation, that any duties attaching alike to the whole Church of Christ should be left, as to the mode of discharging them, to the discretion of individual members of it. And if we can shew that

public prayer is a common duty, we shew at the same time an antecedent necessity for a common form.

Now to do this, we need scarcely go beyond the words of the text. St. Paul is there speaking to the first Bishop in the Church; and every direction to Timothy is at least a direction to the whole of that section of the Church of Christ over which he was appointed to preside. "I exhort," says he, "that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." In this passage we discover, either

9 "Prayer is the principal and most noble part of God's worship, and to be preferred before preaching: nay indeed, to speak strictly and properly, preaching is no part of divine worship; for every proper act of divine worship must have God for its immediate object, and God's glory for its immediate end. But the immediate object of preaching are men, to whom it is directed, and the immediate end of it is the instruction of men; though it is true, in the ultimate end of it, it tends to and ends in the glory of God, as indeed all religious actions do, and all our other actions of moment should do. But prayer is immediately directed to God himself, and it is an immediate glorification of him, and a paying of divine worship and honour to him. In a word, by preaching we are taught how to worship God; but prayer is itself God's worship. Hence the place of God's worship is styled by our Saviour, the house of prayer, Matt. xxi. 13. It is not called a preaching house, (though there must be a preaching there too at due times and seasons,) but a house of prayer, because prayer is the

directly expressed or distinctly implied, all those elementary particulars which compose the ground work and outline of our present Liturgical and Ritual services. The Apostle is writing to one who had already received authority from himself, over a district territorially defined, to design and enforce regulations with respect to spiritual discipline; and therefore we at once see that he was contemplating a national or at least provincial regulation, and that the result would be, to that extent, uniformity of devotional service in the Church. Timothy, in following St. Paul's directions, would not prescribe different forms of prayer to the several churches under his jurisdiction. We perceive, also, in the terms employed by the Apostle, which are by no means synonymous though similar, a variety and sequence of devotional observances alluded to, which have evident reference to a prescribed form; and which doubtless bore no indistinct resemblance to those heretofore used in the Jewish Synagogues. The Apostle uses the

principal worship of God, to which all religious houses are dedicated, and it is the constant and daily business to be performed in them. No wonder, therefore, that the apostle charges Timothy to take a special care concerning the Liturgy and public prayers of the church, that they be duly and rightly performed: I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made, &c."—Bull, "Common Prayers, ancient, useful, and necessary."

terms which have been severally translated "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks," in a manner which shews that he knew them to be already familiar to the mind of Timothy, and as if the mere mention of them would at once convey to him the impression that the writer's wish was for a form of prayer to be prepared for the use of that diocese, in outward respects analogous to the Jewish ritual, but adapted in its language and spirit to the new views of the gospel, and to the present civil position of that portion of the Church of Christ. This is the sense in which the Church has always interpreted this important passage; and she has, from the earliest times, modelled her formularies according to this view of the Apostle's instructions. Thus we have, in our own services, supplications, or general confessions of sin and entreaty for the pardon of it-prayers, or solemn addresses to God both on our own behalf and that of others-intercessions, or rather interlocutory prayer, in which the people bear a share, answering to what are now denominated litanies and suffragesand finally, giving of thanks. Interlocutory prayer, which seems evidently to be alluded to in the word ἐντένζεις, necessarily implies both public order and prescriptive form: it is impossible for the people to respond to the priest, except in a prescribed form of words.

But we may draw a still further conclusion from the words of the text, which will materially strengthen our main position, that fixed forms of worship comprise a necessary portion of the elements of a visible and Catholic Church. When the Apostle has delineated the general shape which the devotions of the Church are to assume, he proceeds to specify on whose behalf they are especially to be offered; and here his directions are brief and clear-" for all men." Now this is certainly a remarkable expression, standing thus alone. We cannot indeed be surprised, (for it is of the very spirit of the Gospel,) that we should be enjoined, in the midst of our devotions, not to omit a petition to the common Father and common Redeemer, in favour of all mankind. It forms a conspicuous portion of that original model on which all public prayers should be founded, that we should pray continually that "God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven." But the remarkable fact here is, that if we are to take the Apostle's directions as we find them, -and they are too emphatic and precise to admit of any lax and accommodating interpretation,-prayer for all men is not merely to form a part but the substance—nay, as far as appears, the whole—of our devotions. Nothing can more distinctly shew that it was of public worship that St. Paul was speaking, of which general addresses to God must always

form the principal portion; nor can we, therefore, require any further evidence that he was recommending the adoption of a fixed and systematic ritual to be used by the whole district over which Timothy presided; or we should find such evidence in what follows-"for kings and for all that are in authority." Here is a distinct reference to, and acknowledgment of, territorial divisions in the Church of Christ-for in this general term particulars are doubtless implied; and when St. Paul thus directs us to pray for kings and all that are in authority, he means more especially each district for its own king. It is one of the wonders of Christianity that it adapts itself to all forms of government, seeking only to infuse a new spirit into them without destroying the outward system, on the same principle as it purifies the corrupt nature of man without changing its constitution or counteracting its original principles. Hence we observe that the boundaries of the primitive Churches were for the most part territorial. He who acknowledged the sovereignty of the Saviour was not required at the same time to renounce or to change that of his earthly master: as far as civil allegiance was concerned, he was to "abide in that state in which he was called;" and it can hardly be denied that the spirit of St. Paul's direction is, that the Church of Ephesus under Timothy, and each

Church, in like manner, under their respective Bishops, should pray, in their public character and services, not only for earthly authorities in general, but for that more especially under which they themselves might happen to be placed, that, in the Apostle's words, "they may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." This epistle, it must be borne in mind, is not a Catholic epistle, but addressed to Timothy alone. The general terms of this passage, therefore, while they must in the first instance be limited in their application to the range of that Bishop's jurisdiction, shew at the same time that the principles therein laid down are equally applicable for the guidance of the whole Church of Christ. Here then is another proof that the Catholic Church was designed to become national in its sub-divisions; universal as a whole. These early liturgical directions are in truth, prophetic. While the Church was still in its infancy it was to assume the tone and character adapted to those distant days when "kings should become its nursing fathers, and queens its nursing mothers:" and even yet, alas! the comprehensive language of its services is uttered by us but in the spirit of prophecy! The day is probably vet far distant when the Catholic Church shall be indeed universal, and when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover

the sea;" but nevertheless the general Church of the living God is authorized—nay, bound, to lift up its voice, in the name and for the sake of all men, to that "God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

Thus, from general considerations of the requisites of a visible and universal Church, as well as from the apostolical injunctions contained in the text, it appears that fixed and authorized rituals are essential to the public worship of a Church so constituted; any other evidently partaking either of the nature of private devotion, or congregational schism. Let us now proceed to some historical and probable reasons tending to confirm this view, concluding with a brief glance at the history and excellencies of our own forms of worship.

Should it be thought to militate against the indispensability of such forms, that none such have been provided for the use of the Church by the infallible Spirit of God, it may be replied, that an infallible command to use them is of tantamount authority and obligation; while there are evident reasons, the principle itself being prescribed, why the detail should be left to the several national churches, to be modified by them, in harmony with the apostolical outline, according to their individual condition and necessities.

If we look back to the Jews, the shadow, in this respect as well as others, "of good things to come," we shall find that their liturgy, in all its parts, was prescribed to them with the utmost minuteness. Should this appear, at first sight, a somewhat startling assertion, we must call to mind the nature of their liturgical services. These differed from ours in being material rather than spiritual; as standing in burnt-offerings and other sacrifices—in the observance of times and seasons— "in meats and drinks, and divers washings and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." This was their liturgy; and how minutely it was prescribed to them both in form, and, where words were necessary, in words also, I need not stop to specify. And afterwards, as their religion grew more spiritual, from the evangelical light gradually thrown over it by the prophets, who were as rays that heralded the Sun of righteousness, their Liturgy, a written and prescribed form, resembled, in its great outlines, those which have been continued to our own day. "Their books of Common Prayer," says Hooker, "contained partly hymns taken out of the Holy Scripture, partly Benedictions, Thanksgivings, Supplications, penned by such as have been from time to time the governors of the Synagogue. These they sorted into their several times and places; some to begin the

service of God with, and some to end; some to go before, and some to follow, and some to be interlaced between, the Divine Readings of the Law and the Prophets."10 The analogy was strictly followed in the Christian Church; and there is little more variety in the ancient Liturgies than in the Gospels themselves. One who has deeply investigated this subject has remarked, "that all the primitive Liturgies of the Church may be reduced to four, which have been used in different churches from a period of profound antiquity—the great Oriental, the Alexandrian, the Roman, and the Gallican. These four great liturgies appear to have been the parents of all the forms now extant, and indeed of all which we can in any manner discover; and their antiquity was so very remote, their use so extensive in those ages when bishops were most independent, that it seems difficult to place their origin at a lower point than the Apostolic age."11 "That each Church preserved continually the same liturgy, is certain." "The order of

10 Book V. 16.

¹¹ So also Bishop Bull, in his excellent sermon on "Common Prayers:"—"Other instances of the like nature I could give you, if the time would permit. But these I think are sufficient to shew that there were set prescribed offices and forms of prayer and praise, and profession of faith, delivered to all the churches of Christ by the apostles or their immediate successors; many of those forms (notwithstanding the manifold corruptions and depra-

the parts was always preserved; the same rites and ceremonies continually repeated; the same ideas and language, without material variation, transmitted from generation to generation. The people always knew the precise point at which they were

vations of the primitive Liturgies in after times) being still retained, and unanimously used in all the churches of Christ to this day.

"Indeed the exercise of the public worship of God in set and prescribed forms of prayer hath been the practice of all settled churches of God, not only ever since Christianity, but also before our Saviour's coming into the world. All the learned know, that the ancient church of the Jews before Christ had set forms of prayer, which they used in their temples and synagogues, as all the Jews have at this day. And indeed many of those forms are very good and excellent, and have no other fault to be found in them, but that they do not end as the prayers of us Christians do, "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Nay, it is very observable that our Lord Christ himself, when he recommended to his disciples, upon their desire, a prayer to be used by them, (that which we call The Lord's Prayer,) he did not frame an entirely new prayer, in words of his own conception, but took out of the ancient euchologie, or prayer books of the Jews, what was good and laudable in them, and out of them composed that prayer. 'The very preface of the Lord's prayer, Our Father, which art in heaven, was the usual preface of the Jewish prayers. And all the following petitions are to be found almost in the very same words in their prayer books.

"He that doubts of this, if he understands the learned languages, may be satisfied by consulting Drusius and Capellus, in their notes upon the sixth chapter of St. Matthew, the ninth and following verses. And the reflection of the learned Grotius

to repeat their responses, chant their sacred hymn, or join in the well-known prayer."

One main object of the Church of England, at the time of the Reformation, was to return to the use of these primitive and time-hallowed forms. She shook off the practices of Rome, so far as they were departures from Catholic truth; but disdained not to accept at her hand such treasures of ancient and pious usage as she had, perhaps unconsciously, retained under the deep incrustations of her errors. "As far as they of the Church of Rome follow Reason and Truth," says Hooker, "we fear not to tread the self-same steps wherein they have gone,

upon this is very remarkable: 'So far was the Lord himself of the Christian church from all affectation of unnecessary novelty.' Our Saviour in this instance hath plainly shewn us what respect we ought to have for forms of prayer anciently received and approved by the church of God. And indeed it were no difficult thing to shew that many of the offices and forms of prayer, and other religious institutions, received in the church of Christ, are in their first original to be referred as due to the piety and devotion of the church of God before the coming of Christ in the flesh: Christianity being no innovation, but only the perfection of the old religion; and it being the same spirit of Christ that governed the church of God, both under the Old and New Testament."—Works, vol. i. p. 334. The reader may likewise consult Falkner's Libertas, p. 106, &c.

¹¹ PALMER, "Antiquities of the English Ritual," vol. i. pp. 8, 9.

and to be their followers. Where Rome keepeth that which is ancienter and better, others whom we more affect leaving it for newer and changing it for worse, we had rather follow the perfections of them whom we like not, than in defects resemble them whom we love."¹²

Such are a few of the historical reasons for a fixed and publicly-authorized form of worship. Those arising from duty, propriety, and expediency, are too numerous to be specified in this place: I will briefly allude to a few only of those which spring directly out of the main argument of this discourse—which is this, that fixed and authorized forms of worship form a necessary part of a visible and undivided Church; and cannot consistently be neglected except by those who deny both.

If the Church of Christ be a visible Church, the tokens of such visibility must be at once obvious and pervading. They must not only be seen by them that are within, but by them that are without also. Nor must they appear only in a single religious act, but by every act in which a religious character is involved, and by which the Church of Christ can be distinguished from the world without: and in what can this distinction be made more obvious than in the common observance of public

¹² Hooker, V. § 28.

worship? What mark of visibility and of separation from the rest of mankind can be more indelible, or make the line of demarkation between the two less likely to be mistaken, than a book of common prayer?

This reason, drawn from the visibility of the Church, applies still more strongly to its unity. For what can more effectually bind together, in one heart and one soul, the various branches of the Christian Church scattered throughout the world, than a common form, in which their united prayers and praises may ascend up to the throne of heaven, in anticipation of that general song which shall fill the mouths of the Church triumphant, throughout eternal ages?

Again: in nothing is our progress in faith, in knowledge, in piety—nay, even in good works—more distinctly indicated, than in prayer; and were this most important religious service left to the discretion of each individual minister, congregations would differ as to the degree of their Christian privileges, in exact proportion to the graces which their immediate teacher might happen to possess; "I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos," would be no longer the cry of a carnal mind, but a consideration of momentous import; the unity of the Church would disappear; the sacraments would no longer be necessarily administered

according to Christ's holy institution;¹³ ensnaring doctrines would be insinuated under the garb of an address to the Almighty; and heresy itself might lurk beneath the utterance of a suffrage,

13 "The reasons are such as these. 1. That hereby a fit, true, right, and well ordered way of worship, in addresses to God, may be best secured to the Church, in its public service of God, that neither God nor his worship may be dishonoured; there being many easily discernible ways, of considerable miscarriage, in the public offices of the Church, even by them who err not in the doctrines of Religion: 2. That needful comprehensive petitions for all common and ordinary spiritual and outward wants, of ourselves or others, with fit thanksgivings, may not in the public supplications of the Church be omitted; which (considering men as they are) can no other way be either so well or at all assured. 3. That the affections and hearts of pions and religious men may be more devout, and better united in their presenting their service to God, where they may consider beforehand what particular prayers and thanksgivings they are to offer up, and come the more ready and prepared to join in them. This is an advantage of which many are deprived by a bad temper of mind, either sucked in by prejudice, or swallowed down by carelessness.

"3, 4. That such difficult parts of Church Offices, as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the matter of which require the great consideration, that they may be clearly and aright expressed, (as both Conformists, and many Non-Conformists acknowledge, and is evident from the many disputes about them, by men neither of mean parts, nor dangerous designs,) may by a more considerate care in the composure of a form, be so framed, that men of greatest understandings may with readiest assent entertain them, and that they may be sufficiently vindicated

or the *omission* of a doxology. No church has ever long remained orthodox without a liturgy.¹⁴

Again: a national religion requires as much a lex scripta as national law; and the very temples with which the surface of our land is covered, are of themselves pledges that the common services within shall be as fixed and public as themselves. With the unity of the Church at large, and the nationality of each particular branch of it, are bound up common times and places for public worship—common and unchangeable rules both for minister and people—common forms for penitence, prayer, and praise—and a deep feeling of common interests and duties here, in order to

against the boldest opposers. 5. To be an evidence to other Churches and future times, after what way and manner we worship God, and that both the matter and expression of our service to him, is sound and pious, in our general and common worship. And this may be a full testimony that such a Church both receiving the true faith, and expressing a right way of worship, is both a true and in its measure a pure and incorrupt Church."—Dr. Falkner's "Libertas Ecclesiastica," p. 98: a work well worthy the attention of the student, who wishes to see all the objections that have yet been devised against our book of Common Prayer candidly stated and satisfactorily answered.

14 See, as an excellent illustration of this important truth, drawn from our own age and country, "A Review of the principal Dissenting Colleges in England, during the last century." By the Very Rev. Dr. Turton, the present learned Regius Professor of Divinity in Cambridge.

the attainment, hereafter, of a common immortality.¹⁵

¹⁵Who can read the following eloquent passage of Hooker, without participating in the glow which must have pervaded his heart when he gave utterance to the heavenly-minded effusion?

"The very assembling of men therefore unto this service hath been ever solemn. And concerning the place of assembly, although it serve for other uses as well as this, yet seeing that our Lord himself hath to this, as to the chiefest of all other, plainly sanctified his own temple, by entituling it the house of prayer, what preeminence of dignity soever hath been either by the ordinance, or through the special favour and providence, of God annexed unto his sanctuary, the principal cause thereof must needs be in regard of common prayer. For the honour and furtherance whereof, if it be as the gravest of the ancient fathers seriously were persuaded, and do oftentimes plainly teach, affirming that the house of prayer is a court, beautified with the presence of celestial powers; that there we stand, we pray, we sound forth hymns unto God, having his angels intermingled as our associates; and that with reference hereunto the apostle doth require so great care to be had of decency for the angels' sake; how can we come to the house of prayer, and not be moved with the very glory of the place itself, so to frame our affections praying as doth best beseem them, whose suits the Almighty doth there sit to hear, and his angels attend to further? When this was ingrafted in the minds of men, there needed no penal statutes to draw them unto public prayer. The warning sound was no sooner heard, but the churches were presently filled, the pavements covered with bodies prostrate, and washed with their tears of devout joy. And as the place of public prayer is a circumstance in the outward form thereof, which liath moment to help devotion; so the person much more with whom the people of God do join themselves in this action, as with him that standeth and speaketh in the presence of God for them. The authority of

I might here, were it necessary before an audience like the present, shew how minutely his place, the fervour of his zeal, the piety and gravity of his whole behaviour, must needs exceedingly both grace and set forward the service he doth. But of all helps for due performance of this service, the greatest is that very set and standing order itself, which, framed with common advice, hath both for matter and form prescribed whatsoever is herein publicly done. No doubt, from God it hath proceeded, and by us it must be acknowledged a work of singular care and providence, that the church hath evermore held a prescript form of common prayer, although not in all things every where the same, yet for the most part retaining still the same analogy. So that if the liturgies of all ancient churches throughout the world be compared amongst themselves, it may be easily perceived they had all one original mould, and that the public prayer of the people of God in churches throughly settled, did never use to be voluntary dictates, proceeding from any man's extemporal wit. To him which considereth the grievous and scandalous inconveniences, whereunto they make themselves daily subject, with whom any blind and secret corner is judged a fit house of common prayer; the manifold confusions which they fall into, where every man's private spirit and gift (as they term it) is the only bishop that ordaineth him to this ministry; the irksome deformities whereby through endless and senseless effusions of indigested prayers, they oftentimes disgrace in most unsufferable manner, the worthiest part of Christian duty towards God, who herein are subject to no certain order, but pray both what and how they list; to him, I say, which weigheth duly all these things, the reasons cannot be obscure, why God doth in public prayer so much respect the solemnity of places where, the authority and calling of persons by whom, and the precise appointment even with what words or sentences his name should be called on amongst his people."-Hooker, Book V. § 25.

our own primitive and spiritual forms of prayer and of administration of the sacraments accord with the principles here laid down: How carefully they were composed, from ancient models, and in the very language of Scripture; so that while Calvin himself was constrained to confess, concerning the Liturgy, that even "its vanities might be tolerated" (tolerabiles ineptias,) "the Romanist seceders themselves could allege against it no charge but that of imperfection; and for ten or eleven years came to our churches, joined in our devotions, and communicated without scruple, till a temporal interest of the Church of Rome rent the schism wider, and make it gape like the jaws of the grave." 16

I might shew how, during the Marian persecution, the prayer-book was made the touchstone of orthodoxy; some of the most learned of the martyrs appealing to it as their confession of faith, and others hugging it amidst the flames;—how, during the not less bitter sufferings of Puritanical rule, it was the only lamp of the Episcopal church that was not entirely put out—consoling with its stolen light such men as Taylor, and Hammond, and Evelyn, when every thing else was dark and gloomy around them;—but I will add no more than a few melancholy, yet manly words, from him, who, having

¹⁶ Taylor, VII. 289.

himself experienced the depth of its consolations, was, in the most dangerous days, its bold and eloquent defender: "The Liturgy of the Church of England was with the greatest deliberation compiled out of Scripture, the most of it; all the rest agreeing with Scripture, and drawn from the liturgies of the ancient Church, and made by men famous in their generations, whose reputations and glory of martyrdom hath made it immodest for the best of men now to compare themselves with them: the rubrics of which book was writ in the blood of many of the compilers"-"yet this excellent book hath had the fate to be cut in pieces with a penknife, and thrown into the fire; but it is not consumed; at first it was sown in tears, and is now watered with tears, yet never was any holy thing drowned and extinguished with tears. began with the martyrdom of the compilers, and the church hath been vexed ever since by angry spirits, and she was forced to defend it with much trouble and unquietness; but it is to be hoped that all these storms are sent but to increase the zeal and confidence of the pious sons of the Church of England. Indeed, the greatest danger that ever the Common Prayer Book had, was the indifferency and indevotion of them who used it but as a common blessing.17

¹⁷ Taylor, VII. 311, 312.



LECTURE VII.

(CHURCH AUTHORITY FOR RESTRAINING ERROR.)
HERESY AND SCHISM.

THE ARGUMENT.

CHURCH AUTHORITY INDISPENSABLE - THE OPINION OF THE CHURCH AT LARGE BINDING ON THE MINORITY OF ITS MEMBERS-(THE RULE OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT EXPLAINED IN A NOTE)—ERRORS OF ROMANISM AND DISSENT ON THIS POINT --- DIFFICULTY OF ASCERTAINING THE DECISIONS OF THE CHURCH NO ARGUMENT AGAINST THEIR STRIN-GENCY WHEN KNOWN-CHURCH AUTHORITY RECOGNIZED, IN SOME SENSE, BY ALL PARTIES-EXTENT LIMITED TO EXPULSION FROM COM-MUNION FOR DOCTRINAL ERRORS-ROMISH ABUSES ON THIS POINT-DEFINITIONS OF ERRORS-INFIDELITY-HERESY-SCHISM-DENIAL OF ANY OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE CREEDS HERESY-DENIAL OF ANY OF THE ARTICLES OF RELIGION SCHISM-BISHOP BEVERIDGE'S VIEW OF THIS SUBJECT STATED—SCHISM MAY BE CAUSED BY THE ENACTMENT OF IMPROPER LAWS-AS WELL AS BY DISOBEDIENCE TO JUST ONES-THE BOAST OF SCHISMATICS THAT THEY DIFFER FROM US BUT ON SMALL MATTERS AN AGGRAVATION OF THEIR OFFENCE-SCRIPTURE EXHORTATION TO UNITY.



LECTURE VII:

(CHURCH AUTHORITY FOR RESTRAINING ERROR.) HERESY AND SCHISM.

Matthew, xviii. 17, 18.

And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Having traced out the great elements of which the visible Church of Christ consists, there seem to be but two questions which now remain for our discussion—the authority which a Church so constituted must necessarily possess to check and punish error, and to propagate the truth. It would have been totally useless that this scheme, at once so complex and harmonious, should have been instituted for the religious welfare of mankind, if men are still at full liberty to receive or reject it, without any other consequences than those which attach to mere matters of opinion. If unity be a principle which pervades the sacred edifice of the Church, as a

cement that binds it together upwards from its very foundation, then must there be, somewhere, the authority to enforce it; deny this, and you reduce the Church at once to a number of isolated individuals; just as, if human laws be not executed as well as enacted, the bonds of civil obligation, and the divisions of men into nations and communities, are at an end.

The Scriptures are the law of the Church. With whom, then, rests the authority to enforce that law when it is clear, and to interpret it when it is ambiguous? Evidently, with the Church itself in a lawfully-constituted assembly. "The Church," says the 20th Art. "hath authority in controversies of Faith:" and if authority, then power to exercise and enforce it. Since our Lawgiver has left us without constituting any individual or body of individuals authoritative interpreters of his law, it is clear that the view of his meaning, which is most likely to be the right one, must be that in which all whom it concerns are agreed; and that, in points more complex, in which such general agreement is unattainable, and moral certainty is the nearest approach to infallibility that the nature of the question will admit, the opinion of the majority —the means and ability of forming an opinion being on both sides equal—as it ought justly, in so doubtful a matter, to be preferred by the minority

to their own, so may it be enforced by such majority as a condition of unity. This is a rule, not only of religion, but of every-day life; and he who has the highest opinion of the prerogative of private judgment should be the very last to impugn the validity of it. For the more an individual respects his own opinion, the more, by parity of reason, should be respect that of others: and the opinion of the Church is but the aggregate of the private judgment of every individual of which it is composed. If the Church at large may not come to a decision respecting the meaning of God's word, still less may individuals presume to do so. That which resides not in the whole, resides not in each part of that whole. Hence, therefore, we are driven either to deny altogether the right of private judgment, or to confess that the final and supreme judgment rests in the Church at large.1

I think this argument unanswerable, even on the lowest and broadest grounds on which the question

¹ There can be little doubt that much, though by no means all the controversy, respecting the value of private judgment on doctrinal questions, arises, (as in the case of Tradition), from want of a due definition of the phrase, and the constant usage of it, on the same occasion, in the same sense. No one, I venture to suppose, will hesitate to assent to the proposition, that each man is ultimately to be governed, both in faith and practice, by his own deliberate convictions. The private judgment never can, and never ought, to yield to public authority, when they appear to

of Church authority can be argued: and that it escapes the difficulties in which both the Romanist and the Latitudinarian are inextricably involved. The Romanist considers the supreme authority in the Church, not only as an interpreter, but as a law-giver, to be vested either in an individual alone,

the individual so opposed to each other that self-respect would be sacrificed, and conscience wounded, by changing the one rule for the other. The real question is not, are private judgments (whether rightly or wrongly formed, it matters not,) to be violently bent and outraged, in order that they may be made conformable to public decisions; though this is too often represented to be the real question; but the true inquiry is, how are men to form their private judgments? That they are to be the ultimate quide we allow; but how are they to be trained for their office? Men argue as if they were born with them, or as if they came by intuition. Now opinions may; but judgments do not:-a child has an opinion as to the working of a steam-engine, but no judgment. If he wished, in after life, to work one himself, he would put away his childish notions concerning its construction, and study the subject from the best sources of information. So it is with a man of ordinary prudence, who wishes to understand the rule of faith and practice. He first forms his private judgment before he fixes and acts upon it; and the simple question is, what are the best sources of information from which the safest knowledge may most justly be expected? I suspect that a wise man would adopt the same principle of inquiry in religious matters, as in the case above supposed; he would look to elementary rules for his basis, and to the experience of others for their application; that is, he would take Holy Scripture for his guide, and uniform tradition for its interpretation. It is thus that he would carefully

or in that individual assisted by a council in itself but forming a small section of the Catholic Church: the latitudinarian considers such authority to be vested in the Scripture alone, the interpretation of Scripture being left to each individual, or to that small section of the Church to which he may think

form his private judgments before he pronounced them; and would find at last, that the wiser he grew himself, the more would his opinions coincide with the wise and good of all ages, who had gone before him in the same path of careful inquiry.

Independent as men think themselves in matters of opinion, it is always under some influence beyond the mere spontaneous exercise of free and unbiassed thought that even what seem their most deliberate judgments are formed. They may be guided by the Church at large, or an individual expounder of it; by an ordinance of a synod, or a casual impression. What are called private judgments, always owe their origin to some extraneous influences like these; and one of the best uses to which we can apply the faculty of reason, is to place ourselves under such influence as is least likely to deceive us. Religion requires all men equally to entertain and hold conclusions, though all men are not equally capable of drawing them; a all that most of us are able to do, in this case, is to put our private judgments into the hands best calculated to guide it safely; and if we adhere to Scripture, where it is clear, and the interpretation most generally agreed upon where it is doubtful, we shall not err widely from the right path.

"It is evident to experience," says Barrow, "that every man is not capable to judge, or able to guide himself in matters of this

a On this subject the reader may consult an excellent sermon by Dr. Hawkins, the Provost of Oriel; strongly setting forth the duty as well as privilege of Private Judgment.

proper to belong: while the ancient, and orthodox, and as we hold, rational view of the matter is, that Holy Scripture is the sole and supreme law, the interpretation of which is to be sought in the general concurrence of the Church, and the degree of its certainty to be measured by the unanimity of that concurrence throughout successive generations. We know, indeed, that it is often impossible to

nature (concerning divine truth and conscience.) There are children in understanding; there are men weak in faith (or knowledge concerning the faith; there are idiots, (men not bad, but simple,) persons occupying the room of the unlearned, unskilful in the word of righteousness, who, as the apostle saith, 'need that one should teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God.'

"The vulgar sort of men are as undiscerning and injudicious in all things, so peculiarly in matters of this nature, so much abstracted from common sense and experience; whence we see them easily seduced into the fondest conceits and wildest courses, by any slender artifice or fair pretence, 'like children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cumning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.'

"There are also some particular cases, a competent information and skill in which must depend upon improvement of mind acquired by more than ordinary study and experience; so that in them most people do want sufficient means of attaining knowledge requisite to guide their judgment or their practice; and for such persons, in such cases, it is plainly the best, the wisest, and the safest way, to rely upon the direction of their Guides, assenting to what they declare, acting what they prescribe, going whither they conduct."—First Sermon on Heb. xiii. 17.

arrive at a correct knowledge of this opinion of the universal Church, on many questions of the utmost importance. Councils, especially in later times, seldom pronounce it accurately. The members of them have often but partially represented the great body of the Church, and have been swayed by improper motives, or by the influence of some extraneous power; while they have not unfrequently employed themselves on other matters besides their only legitimate office, that of interpreting God's word. Still these difficulties do not militate against the truth of our proposition,-that if the sense of the Church at large could be ascertained respecting any subject of lawful religious inquiry, such sense would be that which ought to guide the opinion and satisfy the conscience of every individual member of the Church of Christ. On whatever points such sense has been ascertained, the duty of individuals with regard to them is for ever settled; for religious truth is not mutable with time. Hence, therefore, on all matters of fact, which are beyond dispute; and all matters of faith, concerning which the opinion of the Church has been clearly ascertained, she possesses an authority over her members in which all are bound to acquiesce.

The question of infallibility, and where it may be supposed to reside, seems to lie at the root of all

the difficulties with which the subject of Church authority is beset. To look for it somewhere, appears natural for the human mind, which, in theory, will never rest satisfied with anything short of perfection. Now we have a right to expect it in the Lawgiver, and his Law; but have we an equal right to look for it in an interpretation, any more than in the interpreter? Are moral questions capable of more than a moral certainty; and is it not a part of our spiritual trial to be under the guidance of probable rules, both in faith and duty? This consideration does not make such rules the less binding; for those are to us infallible which we have taken every legitimate and accessible means to ascertain; but it is a complete answer to those who would maintain that the uncertainty which in some cases attends the decisions of the Church, weakens, in every respect, the stringency of Church authority.

That the Church has authority in matters both of faith and discipline, is maintained even by those who differ most widely as to its character and extent.² I might prove this, did time permit, or

² "This conclusion is confirmed by the universal practice of professing Christians in every age. We know from Irenaeus and others, that the Christians avoided all intercourse with heretics. Heretics themselves, in forsaking the communion of the church, acknowledged the same right of judgment. As soon as heresics

the case require it, from the Primitive Fathers, who assert it without a single exception. I need not quote the Doctors of the Church of Rome, for the extent to which they carry it is too well known,

arose within the church itself, so soon did the church exercise this right. The pastors of the church, either separately or conjointly, published their judgments in condemnation of heresies, or confirmation of the truth; and these being approved and acted on by the faithful and their pastors, in every part of the world; the judgment of the universal church was made known. The decisions of many hundreds of synods, not only of the church, but even of heretics, such as Arians, Donatists, &c. establish sufficiently the universal conviction, that the church was authorized to judge in controversies of faith. This principle, indeed, has ever been adopted by all denominations of professing Christians in modern times. The Presbyterians decide controversies of faith in their synods. The Westminster Confession declared that 'It belongeth to synods and councils ministerially to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience.' Owen, and other Independents, claim for particular churches the right of judging in matters of faith, and of expelling heretics; and for the churches collectively, the right of judging particular churches, and separating them from communion, if heretical. It is the same with every other sect.

"The Lutherans acknowledged the right of the church to judge in controversies: they appealed to the judgment of a general council for forty or fifty years: they, themselves, in councils, condemned the Calvinists, Zuinglians, Papists, and innumerable heretics. The Calvinists of France arranged their church government, in successive gradations, of which the highest decided controversies in faith. Those of Holland, in the synod of Dort, condemned the Arminians: the reformed confessions approved of the ancient judgments of the church. In fine, it is needless to speak

and has been too fearfully experienced, to require evidence of the fact.³ I might adduce our own Reformers, nay the Presbyterian Divines of Westminster, and Owen the champion of the Independents, to testify the same thing: but the questions for our more immediate consideration,—the fact of Church authority being granted,—are

of the sentiments and practice of the Oriental, Roman, and British churches, as to the right of the church to judge in controversies of faith. Our churches expressly affirm that 'the church has authority in controversies of faith.' They exercised this authority in framing articles of doctrine, appreving of the ancient creeds, condemning the heresy of Socinus, excommunicating those who affirm the Articles to be superstitious and erroneous: in fine, their constant law and practice has been to separate from their communion all who are convicted of heresy, according to the prescribed forms. This universal practice of the church, and of all religious communities, renders it superfluous to adduce the accordant sentiments of theologians in different ages. It also renders any attempt to adduce the opposite opinions of individuals perfectly futile."—Palmer's Treatise on the Church of Christ, vol. ii. p. 100.

- ³ Vide Petri Dens Theologia, Tom. ii. p. 113, &c.
- 4 "I do believe, that the Authoritative Rule, or Government of the Church, was, is, and ought to be, in the Elders and Rulers of it, being an act of the Office-Power, committed unto them by Christ himself."—Owen on Schism, preface.

Again: "The church wherein such differences do fall out, may doctrinally determine the Truth in them, as it is the Pillar and Ground of Truth; supposing them to be of such weight, as that the edification of the Church is concerned in them."—Id. p. 275.

those fundamental inquiries—to what extent can such authority be justly exercised? and what are the class of offences which come directly under its cognizance?

With respect to the first question, the extent of Church authority, it seems clear, from the language of Scripture, that the highest exercise of its power is expulsion from its communion. And, indeed, what power can be greater than that which, when justly exercised, excludes from the covenanted mercies of the Gospel: "If any man abide not in Christ, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." The language of the text is decisive of the power which the Church possesses over a recusant member, and of the extent to which Christ himself, as the spiritual head of it, will sanction the Church in the exercise of its delegated power: "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican," (that is, let him no longer be considered by thee as a Christian brother, but as standing towards thee simply in the relation of common humanity.) Here ejection from Christian communion is authorized in the case of one who obstinately refuses to retract a trespass against another, when solemnly called upon by the Church to do so: and our Lord adds

⁵ John, xv. 6.

this emphatic sanction to the line of conduct which he thus prescribes—"Verily I say unto you, that" (when ye act according to this rule, for such seems a necessary limitation of his general proposition) "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."6 But no greater power than this simple exclusion from spiritual privileges is ever assigned to the Church, in Scripture, even with regard to the highest religious offences. "A man that is an heretic," says St. Paul to Titus, "after the first and second admonition, reject."7 It was one of the most gross and most unscriptural errors of the Church of Rome to apply civil pains and penalties to the punishment of strictly religious errors. There was the spirit of apostacy in this-in thus openly distrusting and underrating the still heavier, and legitimate punishment, of the deprivation of religious privileges;and a door was opened for that carnal system of Indulgences and Pardons, which, by a righteous

⁶ Our own Church, in its 33d Article, limits its authority by this rule, and founds it on this very text. "That Person, which by open denunciation of the Church, is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful as an Heathen and Publican until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a Judge that hath authority thereunto."

⁷ Titus, iii. 10.

retribution, in turn corrupted the souls of the priesthood by the very instrument which they had originally invented for ensuring the corruption of the people! In all cases where the State is in alliance with the Church, and where the moral law of the Gospel forms part of the law of the land, every offence against Christian morals being also an offence to civil society, the execution of that branch of religious discipline may and ought to be left to the civil power: the *spiritual* jurisdiction, in such cases, is clearly laid down by St. Paul in the 5th chapter of his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians: it consists in the immediate suspension of the immoral person from Christian communion, and final expulsion on his obstinate impenitence.

Having ascertained the nature and extent of Church Authority; and limiting the consideration of the exercise of it to strictly doctrinal errors; let us proceed to enquire briefly in what these errors consist. They seem to be composed of three distinct classes, Infidelity, Heresy, and Schism. And though it may be difficult accurately to define the boundaries of each, (for errors, like virtues, are connected by a sympathetic chain, which wonderfully draws together even those which are, apparently, the most discordant,) yet it is necessary, for our purpose, to indicate the character of each, as most important conclusions

will be found to follow from a distinct understanding of this part of the question.

Infidelity is the denial of a fact, or doctrine, acknowledged by him who denies it to be asserted in Scripture. With such a case we have, at present, no concern.

Heresy is the denial of a doctrine which he who denies it knows to have been declared, by the Catholic church to be a doctrine of Scripture.⁸

Schism is the separation of an individual, or body of individuals, from the communion of their own particular church, or a particular church from the church at large, on the ground of dissent from rites and ceremonies, or practical views of Scripture,

8 Mr. Palmer's definition of Heresy (Vol. i. p. i. Ch. v. Sect. II.) is as follows:- "Heresy is the pertinacions denial of some truth, certainly revealed." Though this be true as a fact, yet it appears to be in some degree imperfect as a definition, because the pertinacity is supposed, or punishment need not follow; and the condition, 'certainly revealed,' brings us back to the original and endless dispute, as to what are the points so revealed. It is clear that of these points the Church must be the judge—she must not debate her authority with the prisoner at her bar-but she must indicate and define to him the law under which she acts, and that clause of it which has rendered him amenable to her censures. This end seems to be attained by the definition attempted in the text. It seems necessary also that the offender should acknowledge his views to differ from Catholic interpretation, otherwise his case would appear to become merely one of error in doctrine, not heresy.

which that church has thought fit to prescribe as terms of communion.

Heresy, then, is the denial of an article of the

9 Mr. Palmer's definition of Schism, (vol. i. p. 51,) is as follows:-"The communion of the Church is two-fold, and there may be offences against it in two ways; either in dividing a particular church, or in dividing that of the universal church. The one arises, when professing Christians divide, or refuse to communicate with the particular church, of which they are members; the other, when particular churches refuse to communicate with the universal Church, that is, with the great body of Christians. offence against communion is called schism; and schism, in its extremest degree, is separation, dissent, or (as it is sometimes called) heresy." Perhaps the distinctions between schism, dissent, and heresy, were not intended to be here marked with precision, as contradistinguished from each other; but it was necessary to the very object of the present writer to be more precise; much confusion having arisen from not sufficiently defining the boundaries between heretical pravity and schismatic separation. He who would thoroughly understand this question, should read Owen on "Schism," in connexion with Bishop Stillingfleet's masterly work "On the Unreasonableness of Separation." It is interesting to observe how all the errors of the Church of Christ may be traced up to the denial of some doctrine contained in our Creeds. The errors of the Independents have their origin in the misunderstanding of the phrase-"Holy Catholic Church." They deny the visibility of that Church, as marked by external ordinances, and hence are driven to seek out other tokens of Church union, indefinite in their character, and destructive of that humility and charity which are essential to the religious peace of society, and the edification of the Christian household "in every good word and work."

Catholic faith; and this is all that is meant by what are called the damnatory clauses attached to the summary of these articles contained in the Athanasian Creed. The apostle says, the man that is an heretic reject. The creed acts on this apostolic instruction, and asserts that except a man believe faithfully the Catholic doctrine, he cannot be saved. The momentous question then is,-What these Catholic doctrines are. What are the great points on which the universal Church was agreed, before the recollection of the primitive apostolical expositions had passed away; before the Church had taken upon itself to pronounce that "anything beside Scripture might be required of men that it should be held as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation;" and before the secular power, having been first taken into alliance with the spiritual authority, had so far corrupted the integrity of those in whom both were combined, as to lead even œcumenical synods to pervert the truth, as it is in Jesus, into an instrument of personal aggrandizement, or public tyranny?—These Catholic doctrines,10 to deny which is heresy in the eye of

¹⁰ It may be thought that two essential articles of doctrine are here omitted; the necessity of an apostolically-commissioned ministry, and of the administration of the Sacraments. The belief in these is clearly implied in the expression, "Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church;" but the fact of their never having been doubted, made it

the Church, and the confession of which is a sufficient mark of unity with the Catholic faith to include him who makes it within the bounds of the visible Church,—are contained, as we have already shewn at large, in the three Creeds; which have, from their first promulgation, been the symbols of belief throughout all Churches of the world. A phrase in one of them, as is well known, has been

unnecessary to specify them more distinctly in the creeds. It was no more likely that a council, consisting exclusively of ecclesiastical persons, and whose authority was confessed in the very fact of their being called together for the purpose of deciding on a matter of faith, should draw up an article respecting their own office, than that an act of parliament should begin by specifying that there is such a thing as a parliament; nor was it necessary to prescribe sacraments to those who had no more doubt of their necessity than they had of their own existence.

"Wherein it is shewed, that the Creed contains all the necessary points of mere belief."—Title to the Chapter. The reader will perceive that the doctrine of "Fundamentals" is, indirectly at least, involved in this question. This is not the place to enter fully into the subject; and for a very learned and ingenious disquisition on the point, the reader is referred to Mr. Palmer's Appendix to the 5th chapter of the 1st volume of his valuable work. The author confesses himself to agree (indeed it is necessary for the theory maintained in this Lecture that he should agree) with Usher, Chillingworth, and Stillingfleet, that the articles of the Creed are to be considered in the light of Fundamentals. The learned reader will consult with much profit Mede's excellent letters to Mr. Hartlib on this important question.

the cause of division between the Eastern and Western Churches, for many generations;¹² and it is well worthy of our notice, that one infallible mark

12 "What opinion I have formed of this part of history, from the materials which have come in my way, I will give you frankly. In the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, various disputes took place with the followers of Macedonius, with respect to the nature and procession of the Holy Ghost: it might be particularly mentioned, with a view to what followed, that, so soon as the years 430 and 431, in the Councils of Alexandria and Ephesus, it was declared, that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Son as well as from the Father. In order to terminate these disputes, the Church in general made a sort of settlement or determination what should be accounted the Catholic doctrine; and, to avoid farther adjustings of formularies, agreed, that nothing should from that time be added to those then under consideration. It is probable that, at that time, the question, whether the Holy Ghost should be spoken of as proceeding from the Father and the Son (Filioque is the famous word) did not occur to men's minds; Filioque was not in the Creeds, though it was not new. The Students in the Western Church seem to have ere long contracted an opinion, that it was proper for them to profess in a Creed, that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Son: they therefore inserted (or one might say, restored) Filioque, meaning, probably, no harm :- and then the Eastern Church thought as little of complaining, as the Western of offending. Afterwards, however, contentions for worldly grandeur produced contentions about theological truth. Rome and Constantinople were Rivals; not only for imperial, but for spiritual pre-eminence.—The Patriarch of Constantinople styled himself Episcopus Æcumenicus: Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, was more lowly in the title he assumed; he was "Servus servorum" scilicit Dei; but, in his pretensions to authority, he was equally

of corruption in the Church has always been the gradual addition to these originally simple and truly Catholic terms of unity; thus multiplying the grounds of a charge of heresy, by increasing the number of those points of faith, in the denial of which that sin was involved; and consequently the number of those who found it impossible to agree with them. At the Reformation, our own branch of the Church Catholic returned at once to the original and scriptural terms of communion; declaring, in her memorable Eighth Article, that "the three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and that which is commonly called the ambitious. The Patriarch was the head of the Eastern Church; the Pope of the Western.—This rivalship made the Churches seek occasions of blaming each other; and thus the insertion of Filioque came to be complained of as a breach of Faith. It was defended by the Western Church, because the word contained right doctrine; this was enough to make the Eastern Church dispute the doctrine; they did so, and the dispute still subsists, and still causes a separation betwixt the Eastern and Western Churches.-One Pope (Leo III.) did once, for the sake of peace, order Filioque to be put out of the Creed, at the same time ratifying the doctrine, which it comprehends; -but he could only prevail in those Churches which were under his most immediate inspection; and that only for a time.-The obstinate resistance of the Greek or Eastern Church to the insertion of Filioque is the more likely to be owing to some worldly considerations, as several of the Greek Fathers have the doctrine in their works, clearly expressed."— Hey, vol. ii. p. 428, &c. See also Pearson on the Article "I believe in the Holy Ghost."

Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." Those, and those only, who deny the doctrines therein contained, are, in her eyes, guilty of heresy. They who assent to them, it is true, may yet be in grievous error-nay, in peril; but there is nothing which, in her eyes, places them beyond the pale of the communion of saints, and out of the reach of gospel salvation. These Creeds are the undoubted Traditions of the Church; established by her Councils in the purest times; adhered to by her main body throughout all ages; and forming a bulwark, even now, (notwithstanding that the human mind has had so many centuries in which to devise error in all its forms,) strong enough to hold together the main elements of Truth, in the midst of the confusion that has so long raged around them. It was a providential circumstance for the Church, that doctrinal heresies so soon shewed themselves; and were detected ere the extraordinary illuminations of the Spirit had altogether faded "into the light of common day." There is as little variety in error, as there is mutability in truth; and the decisions of the Church, in her earliest days, still stand as finger-posts to mankind, which no bye-paths, since then invented by the Enemy of our souls, have ever been able to elude!

To deny an article of the Creeds, then, is of the nature of Heresy: and though, without an open confession on the part of the offender, and a formal sentence on the part of the Church, individual Christians would not be justified in acting towards such an one according to the exclusive rule prescribed by the Apostle, yet the rule itself is not by disuse made obsolete; nor can the offender himself plead impunity on the ground of remissness on the Church's part. Her Creeds are, in this respect, her justification; for she has solemnly recorded her sentence in these her public formularies; and He who "is with her alway, even unto the end of the world" hath said—" whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven."

From the consideration of Heresy, we are led naturally to that of Schism,—a question more complex, and in which preciseness of definition is less attainable. We have already attempted to characterize it, as follows: Schism, is the separation of an individual, or body of individuals, from the communion of their own particular Church, or that of a particular Church from the Church at large, on the ground of dissent from rites and ceremonies, or practical views of scripture, which that Church, or the Church at large, has thought fit to prescribe as terms of communion.

The term communion is here used for the sake of

clearness, as distinguished from unity. Unity is secured by assent to the Creeds; but in order to reduce the gospel to actual practice, more specific terms must be agreed upon to bind Christians together in the same habits, the same services, the same ceremonies, the same principles of private morality and of civil allegiance. Hence the necessity for articles of religion as well as articles of faith: religion applying to the whole Christian walk, faith referring solely to the principles by which that walk is directed. Now the preparation of articles of religion must, from the nature of things, be left, on many points, to each individual Church: they must necessarily be modified to the situation and circumstances of those for whom they are intended. Our own articles have asserted the authority in this matter, and with admirable precision, both for the Church Catholic with proper limitations, and, subordinate thereto, for each separate branch of it. "The Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies: and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's word written." So much for the Church at large; and then, for each particular branch of it, she asserts its liberty as follows: "It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly like: for at all times they have

¹³ Article xx.

been diverse, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word.-Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church, ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying." Now our articles of religion, with the exception of those which are explications of the great truths contained in the Creeds, or protestations against doctrinal errors maintained on such points by other Churches, are in a great measure directed to matters (of discipline or ceremony) which bring them under the rule here laid down: they are constructed, as to form, with special reference to the case of our own branch of the Catholic Church, and cannot be openly and pertinaciously broken without the sin of schism. Yet it is evident, from the abovequoted authority, that this sin is then only committed when the rite or ceremony so broken has been lawfully prescribed, in accordance with God's word and the analogy of the Church at large. The schism may be in him who makes, and not in him who disobeys the law; if that law be constituted on an unauthorized basis. What the legitimate basis is, has been clearly argued from Scripture by Bishop Beveridge in a "Concio ad Clerum, De Ritibus Ecclesiasticis," which was preached by him

before the Convocation of the Bishops and Clergy of the province of Canterbury, and may, therefore, both on account of the man, and the occasion, (for the convocation was not, in that day, a mere matter of form), be considered worthy of peculiar respect. His text is St. Paul's own decision as to a mere custom which seems to have prevailed in the Corinthian Church, of women worshipping with the head uncovered: "If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God." From which the Bishop argues, with unanswerable force, that though each Church may, in accordance with the divine will, institute peculiar rites for its own necessities, yet that no Church has a right to adopt one which has been rejected by the universal Church, or to reject one which the universal Church has adopted.¹⁴ This is the Scriptural rule,

14 The following is a specimen of the learned and pious Bishop's reasoning on this subject: "Hæ porro omnes omnium seculorum Ecclesiæ in necessariis fidei articulis semper consenserunt. Quantum autem ad ritus attinet, isti partim singularibus Ecclesiis proprii fuerunt ac peculiares, partim vero omnibus communes. Ritus qui uni vel alteri Ecclesiæ proprii sunt, ab eâdem pro libitu abrogari possunt, vel retineri; et ab aliis etiam vel repudiari possunt, vel admitti. Adiaphororum enim naturam habent, atque ideo vim nullam obtinent, nisi quam ab istâ recipiunt Ecclesiâ, cujus autoritate sanciti sunt. Qui vero Ecclesiæ universali, hoc est omnibus per omnes ætates Ecclesiis, vel quod tantidem est, maximæ illarum parti semper communes fuere ritus, idem å

and schism lies on either side of it. The Romanists were guilty, most grievously guilty, of the former error: they multiplied doctrines and ceremonies in the Church, which were contrary both to the letter of scripture, and the spirit, nay often the language of primitive antiquity. They finally elevated them from articles of religion into articles of faith, thus placing them on the same level with the creeds,

singularis cujuspiam Ecclesiâ potestate situm est, ritus ab universali Ecclesiâ vel observatos rejicere, vel rejectos observare. Si qua horum alterutrum fecerit, schismatica est, à Christi Corpore se disjungens. Ut quævis autem Ecclesia rectè constituatur, et ita ut verum sanumque Catholicæ membrum permaneat, necesse est, ut ad catholicam sive universalem, in omnibus quoad fieri potest, se conformet, et disciplinam ritusque illius æquè ac doctrinam religiosè complectatur. Quod ne temerè à me dictum videatur, hisce argumentis confirmatum dabo.

I. Primum nobis argumentum suppeditant hæc ipsa Apostoli verba, quæ sub manibus habemus. Enimvero Corinthiaca Provincialis erat Ecclesia, in quam nonnulli novum quendam ritum invehere conati sunt, ut viri scilicet tectis, mulieres nudis capitibus Deum orarent. De quâ re Apostolus certior factus, contra istum ritum hoc loco disputat, probatque eum nequaquam ab istâ Ecclesiâ admitti posse. Et ultimum præcipuumque argumentum suum ducit è consuetudine Ecclesiæ universalis, ut antè observatum est, ex eo nimirum quòd aliæ omnes Ecclesiæ non talem, sed contrariam prorsus consuetudinum haberent, ut viri scilicet nudis, mulieres verò tectis capitibus adorarent. Quod si quis, inquit, contentiosus esse videtur, nos talem consuetudinem non habemus, neque Ecclesiæ Dei. Nimirum ac si in hunc modum argumentaretur!

and making it heresy to doubt or disobey them. Against this the Church of England protested: but not in the spirit of schism, but by an appeal to the scriptures as interpreted by the primitive church.

Quod contrarium est consuetudini ab aliis omnibus Ecclesiis receptæ, non debet admitti à Corinthiaca.

Atqui hoc contrarium est consuetudini ab aliis omnibus Ecclesiis receptæ.

Ergo, &c.

Quod si Ecclesia Corinthiaca ad alias omnes Ecclesias se accommodare, et earum consuetudines ritusque observare non teneretur, hoc apostoli argumentum nullius ponderis aut momenti esset. Ex hac enim hypothesi ritus iste admitti potuisset ab Ecclesia Corinthiaca, etiamsi contrarius esset consuetudini ab aliis omnibus Ecclesiis receptæ: ideoque major propositio apertissimè falsa esset. At verò apostolum legitimè argumentatum fuisse extra dubium est. In hisce enim conscribendis ipso Dei Spiritu, quæ summa est ratio, concitatus erat. Adeo ut neque in ipso argumento neque in argumentandi modo vel fallere posset vel falli. Ac proinde summa etiam ratio postulat, ut unaquæque talis, qualis erat Corinthiaca, provincialis scillet Ecclesia, omnium aliarum sive Ecclesia universalis consuetudines accurate observet. Si qua enim eas non observat, hoc ipso infallibili argumento gravissimi erroris schismatisque convincatur. Neque possibile est, ut sese quevis prætextu defendat. Cum ipse enim Deus hoc argumentum apostolo suo dictaverit, necessariò etiam exinde sequitur, ipsius Dei voluntatem esse, ut singulæ Ecclesiæ provinciales universali conformes sint; atque etiam ut hunc argumentandi modum ab ipso edoctum ad determinandas Ecclesiæ controversias semper adhibemus. Hoc itaque primum sit nostrum argumentum, ab ipso apostolico seu divino potius argumentandi modo assumptum."—Oratio Canonica ante synondum. Anno 1689.

As Chillingworth observes, "Protestants are unanimous and peremptory in their denial that they are truly schismatic, who leave the communion of the visible church, if corrupted; especially if the case be so that they must either leave her communion, or of necessity communicate with her in her corruptions." The apostle's language in the text was a sufficient justification for the Church of England, when she shook off the idolatrous and superstitious customs which Rome had gradually imposed upon her—"we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."—The schism was, in this case, created by those who enjoined doctrines and ceremonies "against God's word."

We may, on the other hand, shew those to be guilty of schism who reject an universally-prevalent and lawfully-constituted rite or custom, and separate themselves from the Church on such grounds, just as those have been already proved to be, who add to such as the Catholic Church hath alone sanctioned: for the apostle's argument from the practice of the Church applies equally on both sides; and "we have such a custom," would have been just as binding, as "we have no such custom," was conclusive as to rejection. Hence, therefore, we see the reasonableness of the decision of our Church on the question of schism: "Whosoever, through his private

judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren."16 This article is clearly directed against those who, though schismatical, were still disposed to submit, generally, to the authority of the Church: and though in these days, authority so exercised may be set at naught, and actual schism be the consequence of putting it forth, yet still the conscience of the Church is pure in this matter—she hath laboured to preserve unity, by the promulgation of judicious laws, and by openly protesting against the breach of them: and the sin thenceforth lies with those who cause so wide a breach for what is confessedly so small a difference. How many are there, voluntarily separated from our communion, who yet openly boast of their accordance with us in all great points of doctrine; as if that very circumstance, of so far agreeing with us, did not magnify the inexcusableness of their own peace-destroying separation! It is an acute but most important observation of Jeremy Taylor,

that "there are some sins whose malignity is accidentally increased by the lightness of the subject matter.—To despise authority, when the obedience is so easy as the wearing of a garment, or doing of a posture, is a greater and more impudent contempt, than to despise authority imposing a great burden of a more considerable pressure, when human infirmity may tempt to disobedience, and lessen the crime." Those who dissent from the Church for trivial reasons, have no slight sin to answer for: it is no light matter, nor will a sincere and conscientious Christian ever consider it such, to set at naught the earnest and affectionate address of the Apostle-"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."17

¹⁷1 Cor. i. 10.

END OF LECTURE VII.



LECTURE VIII.

(CHURCH AUTHORITY FOR PROPAGATING THE TRUTH).

SECULAR AID, EDUCATION, PREACHING.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE COMMISSION TO PROPAGATE THE GOSPEL ISSUED TO MEN NOT TO BOOKS-REASONS FOR THIS-SYSTEM AND SUBORDINATION NECESSARY AMONG THE PROPAGATORS OF THE GOSPEL-THE GOSPEL KINGDOM FOLLOWS THE ANALOGY OF AN EARTHLY KINGDOM AS TO LAWS AND OFFICERS-SYSTEM OBSERVED BY THE APOSTLES AND FIRST PREACHERS OF THE GOSPEL-HUMAN MEANS MAY BE JOINED WITH SPIRITUAL IN SPREADING THE TRUTH-THE LAWS OF HUMAN NATURE AND OF THE GOS-PEL HAVE BOTH THE SAME DIVINE ORIGIN—THEY MAY WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD—HUMAN AUTHORITY AT FIRST OPPOSED TO THE DIVINE LAW -WHEN WHOLE NATIONS BECAME CHRISTIAN THE TWO AUTHORITIES ENTERED INTO ALLIANCE—CHURCH AND STATE ORIGINALLY INDE-PENDENT OF EACH OTHER—THEY CAN AND MAY MUTUALLY PROMOTE EACH OTHER'S ENDS.-THESE SEPARATE ENDS STATED-WHAT PRIVI-LEGES THE CHURCH CLAIMS TO HERSELF-RELIGIOUS TEACHING AND EDUCATION AMONG THEM-WOULD RESIST THE STATE IN ESTABLISHING A RIVAL SYSTEM TO HER'S, IN EITHER OF THESE POINTS-HER DUTY IN SUCH A CASE-SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT OF THIS LECTURE-GENERAL CONCLUSION.



LECTURE VIII.

(CHURCH AUTHORITY FOR PROPAGATING THE TRUTH.)
SECULAR AID, EDUCATION, AND PREACHING.

Mark xvi. 15.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Having now traced out the great outlines of the Gospel scheme, the final question which remains for our consideration is the authority existing in the Church for propagating it through the world. That it was committed to a body of men, to be on their responsibility diffused and administered, is evident from the language of the text—"Go ye," says our Lord to his Apostles—"Go ye into all the world." The duty here enjoined was not committed to a mere writing¹—for a writing still

1"Another point suggested by the miracle of the gift of tongues, is the duty of translating the holy Scriptures into divers languages, so that all may benefit by the light which was to "light every man that cometh into the world." This important work of Christian charity, when faithfully executed, can hardly fail to become a power-

requires the agency of a man to give it efficiency, by preserving and disseminating it; nor was it left, like the great physical truths of the creation, to the reason and judgment and study of mankind; for a revelation is, from its nature, not capable of being

ful instrument of conversion. But it is an instrument only, and not designed to work its own effect, unaccompanied with other aid. It does not supersede the Ministry; although it is its great and all-powerful engine; it is the most effectual means of impressing the truth upon the hearts and minds of men. We read not, however, of any conversions wrought by the Apostles or their immediate successors, merely by sending abroad the written word. They laboured personally themselves; expounding what was written, and reasoning out of the Scriptures. They "reproved, rebuked, exhorted." Yet all was done "decently and in order." No one "stretched beyond his own measure;" each had his stated province and commission. Thus have they left a model to all succeeding ages of the Church, of sober judgment, and sound discretion; of zeal tempered with knowledge; of simplicity guided by wisdom; of charity not degenerating into weak connivance at error, nor giving countenance to disorder and irregularity. Well it becomes us not to depart from these salutary rules; nor to admit any fervours of enthusiasm or any pretences of a private spirit to interfere with their observance. To the Apostles only was the promise given that the Holy Spirit should guide them into "all truth." The substance of that truth we have in their writings; to explain and enforce which, are the prime objects of the now existing ministry. Through them, and not by any immediate communications from above, must the Christian teacher now instruct others; and thus must all the faithful now "try the spirits, whether they be of God."-Van Mildert's Sermons at Lincoln's Inn, serm. XXI.

trusted to those faculties; -- without tradition (using that word in its proper sense as a mode of evidence) it perishes altogether from recollection. Unlike the great facts of nature which surround us, and which are always addressing themselves to man, whether he will hear or whether he will forbear, and which pass not away because they may for a time be forgotten, a direct revelation from on high must by some artificial means be kept in remembrance, or it becomes, to a future generation, as though it had never been. The means provided for perpetuating the gospel revelation is—the only one we can conceive—a body of men; and the means which they have associated with themselves in the discharge of their high trust, and as the only instrument through which they could keep that which has been committed to them, is a body of writings. There seems, as I have said, no other conceivable mode than this, (except indeed by a perpetual miracle), in which a revelation can be perpetuated in its original truth and purity through successive generations. A commission must be issued to man—he alone can obey in his own person, and continue to others a command, which it requires the exercise of reason to comprehend and to fulfil:—no monument is, in this world, so imperishable and so unchangeable, as the successive

generations of mankind. But in the fulfilment of this command, man must necessarily, or at least will most profitably, have recourse to books;reason and experience tell him that his only way to guard the trust committed to him from corruption, is to watch over the purity of that writing in which the terms of his first commission have been accurately recorded; and under its infallible guidance to go forth to preach the gospel to every creature.2 We see, therefore, that without an order of men, responsible both for the propagation, in their own persons, of the truths of the gospel, and the due transmission of that responsibility to others from generation to generation, it would be impossible, without a constant miracle (for there is no innate love for the gospel in the natural heart of man) to secure its dissemination or even its existence in the world; nor could the sin of its neglect, or even the blame of its total disappearance, be justly visited on any, since on none had its preservation been specifically enjoined. Hence, therefore, there is reason, as well as scripture, in St. Paul's express command to Timothy—"The things

² Quid autem si neque Apostoli quidem Scripturas reliquissent nobis, nonne oportebat ordinem sequi traditionis quam tradiderunt iis quibus committebant Ecclesias.—Iren. I. iii. cap. 4. As quoted by Waterland, vol. v. p. 267.

VIII.] SECULAR AID, EDUCATION, PREACHING. 213

that thou hast heard of me—the same commit thou to faithful *men*, who shall be able to teach others also."³

³ ii Tim. ii. 2. On the question of Apostolical Succession—a doctrine essential to the very notion of a visible church, and the denial of which drives us to the acknowledgment, either that no distinct and consecrated order of Priesthood is necessary, or that such order is a mere creature of the state—on this question, the reader who simply seeks for a few brief but convincing arguments, need only read the second of Law's admirable Letters to Bishop HOADLEY-letters which ought to be in the hearts and memories of every one who wishes to see how the apparently opposite errors of Socinianism and Enthusiasm naturally amalgamate and run into one. "What an excellent divine would he be," says Law to the Bishop, "who should tell the world, it was not necessary that the several copies and manuscripts, through which the Scriptures have been transmitted through different ages and languages, should be all true ones, and none of them forged; that "this was a thing subject to so great uncertainty, that God could not hang our salvation on such niceties." Suppose, for proof of this, he should appeal to the Scriptures; and ask, where any mention is made of ascertaining the truth of all the copies; would not this be a way of arguing very theological? The application is very easy.

"Your lordship has not one word to prove the uninterrupted succession of the clergy a trifle or dream; but that it is subject to so great uncertainty, and is never mentioned in the Scriptures. As to the uncertainty of it, it is equally as uncertain, as whether the Scriptures be genuine. There is just the same sufficient historical evidence for the certainty of one, as the other. As to its not being mentioned in the Scriptures, the doctrine upon which it is founded plainly made it unnecessary to mention it. Is it needful for the Scripture to tell us, that if we take our Bible from any false copy,

With an order of men, then, responsible for the dissemination of the gospel, and that order provided with an infallible written law for their guide, how were that body at first—how are they now—to propagate Christianity throughout the earth? To preach the Gospel to every creature is their distinct commission—their duty even to the end of the world;—are they, in the discharge of it, to act independently, each relying for the efficiency of his ministrations on such powers of nature and of grace as have been assigned to him by his heavenly Master; or is each to consider himself but as part of a system—an individual element in a complex

that it is not the word of God? Why then need they tell us, that if we are ordained by usurping false pretenders to ordination, not deriving their authority to that end from the Apostles, that we are no priests? Does not the thing itself speak as plain in one case as in the other? The Scriptures are only of use to us, as they are the word of God: we cannot have this word of God, which was written so many years ago, unless we receive it from authentic copies and manuscripts.

"The clergy have their commission from the Holy Ghost: the power of conferring this commission of the Holy Ghost was left with the Apostles: therefore, the present clergy cannot have the same commission, or call, but from an order of men who have successively conveyed this power from the Apostles to the present time. So that, my lord, I shall beg leave to lay it down as a plain, undeniable, Christian truth, that the order of the clergy is an order of as necessary obligation as the sacraments, and as unalterable as the Holy Scriptures; the same Holy Ghost being as truly

but harmonious scheme, the perfection of which results from the due contribution of each portion of it to the final end in view? The answer to this question will lead to another, and final inquiry—how far the Church is justified in employing or allowing the exercise of any other than purely spiritual instruments in promoting her religious ends.

If the view of the Gospel which has been taken throughout these Lectures, or, rather, which has gradually unfolded itself and claimed our notice as we proceeded,—be in its main outlines a correct one, the denomination which most accurately depicts its character is that which our Saviour so often

the author and founder of the priesthood, as the institutor of the sacraments, or the inspirer of those divine oracles. And when your lordship shall offer any fresh arguments to prove, that no particular sort of clergy is necessary; that the benedictions and administrations of the present clergy of our most excellent church are trifling niceties; if I cannot shew that the same arguments will conclude against the authority of the sacraments and the Scriptures, I faithfully promise your lordship to become a convert to your doctrine.

"What your lordship charges upon your adversaries as an absurd doctrine, in pretending the necessity of one regular, successive, and particular order of the clergy, is a true Christian doctrine: and as certain from Scripture, as that we are to keep to the institution of particular sacraments; or not to alter those particular Scriptures which now compose the canon of the Old and New Testament."

attaches to it, that of a kingdom; a kingdom not of this world, but still within it, a kingdom not of earth but of heaven. It partakes, as we have seen, even here, in its visible and infant state, of all the attributes and characters which belong to a wellorganized government. There is a lawgiver,-no longer visibly present with and resident among his people, for the duties which once rendered such presence necessary have been all discharged: that Lawgiver is Christ. There is a law, not indeed drawn up and enacted in the formal and didactic shape which characterises the edicts of human legislation; but better adapted to the more comprehensive ends which it is designed to answer, by a variety as infinite as the varieties of human life. It is dictated, too, by the Spirit of unerring wisdom, and is as immutable as the truth itself: that Law is the Scriptures. There is, moreover, as in an earthly kingdom, an order of men to whom the administration of this law is committed; and whose regular transmission of the authority originally given to them, from one to another, is ascertained by the very same evidence by which we know that the Scriptures which we now possess are the pure and original word of God: that order is the Priesthood: to them is committed the ministry of Reconciliation: they are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech men by them: they pray

men in Christ's stead.—Having then a system to promulgate, of which order is the characteristic, and human government but a type, we are not surprised to find that system, and order, and mutual subordination mark the conduct of the priesthood, in the discharge of their sacred duties, even from the earliest times. The Apostles, indeed, were all equal; but it was an equality of love. None stretched himself beyond his measure, or boasted in another man's line of things made ready to his hand; but each seems to have taken his district as the Holy Spirit of God suggested, and the Apostolic college at Jerusalem decreed. When converts to the faith are rapidly multiplying at Antioch, the Apostles send Barnabas to their assistance, who immediately and readily obeys the injunction; and when St. Paul is commanded by them to perform some of the ceremonies of the Law, to pacify the believing Jews, he hesitates not to do what he had taught was unnecessary, in accordance with the wish of his brethren5—he is at charges with four men that have a vow on them, and purifies himself with them according to the law of Moses.

And the system and order observed by the apostles and early teachers in the promulgation of the Gospel, are not less observable, or less in harmony

⁴ Acts xi. 22, 23. ⁵ Acts xxi. 23, &c.

with the notion of a government, than their mutual submission to each other. They adhered to the Jewish services, and habits of religious teaching, as long as they were able. Before they went forth on their ministry, they were constant in their attendance at the stated services of the temple.7 It was there, doubtless, that the Holy Ghost fell upon them, and that St. Peter preached his first sermon to the people.8 It was there, at the ninth hour of prayer, that their first miracle of healing, with its accompanying effects, was shewn forth; 9 and it was there that they were commanded to go stand and preach, after their first miraculous deliverance out of the hands of the chief priests and the people.10 This observance of order, and prescribed religious habits was adhered to, with a degree of strictness that might hardly have been expected, even when among the gentile nations. When Paul and Barnabas are sent forth to convert the heathen, they leave not their Jewish observances wholly behind them: after having been duly set apart for their special mission, by the laying on of the hands of the church at Antioch,11 in obedience to the command of the Holy Ghost, they commence their foreign mission at Salamis, by preaching in the Jewish synagogue; 12 at Antioch in Pisidia, we find them entering into the synagogue on

 ⁷ Luke xxiv. 53. 8 Acts ii. 9 Acts iii. 10 Acts v. 20, 21.
 11 Acts xiii. 3. 12 Acts xiii. 5.

the sabbath day, and after the reading of the law and prophets addressing the people.¹³ This course they adopted at Iconium,¹⁴ Thessalonica,¹⁵ Berea,¹⁶ Athens,¹⁷ Corinth,¹⁸ and wherever a synagogue was to be found; and when such was not the case, their usual conduct is intimated in St. Luke's account of it at Philippi—"on the sabbath, we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made."¹⁹

With these, and similar marks of organization and system in the first promulgation of Christianity, we cannot doubt that as far as means merely human are pure and innocent, they may without injury to the character of the Gospel be associated with means which are simply spiritual, in the propagation of religious truth. God's natural and spiritual government of mankind are not necessarily in hostility with each other; and any principles which we find to be inherent in human nature, may, as having a common origin with Christianity itself, be called into operation by the ministers of the Gospel, as allies and supporters of that great scheme which has the purification of our human nature for its Such a principle is civil government. Order and subordination are an universal law of our

¹³ Acts xiii. 14. ¹⁴ Acts xiv. 1.

Acts xvii. 1, 2. ¹⁶ Acts xvii. 10. ¹⁷ Acts xvii. 17. ¹⁸ Acts xviii. 4.
 ¹⁹ Acts xvii. 13.

nature; and seem to have been designed, by the Author of nature, as a general principle by which the elements of human society may be held together, and its beneficial ends in some degree attained, notwithstanding the corruption of the heart of man, and the disorders thereby introduced into the whole frame-work of humanity. One great object of Christianity is to remedy these disorders; and to restore men, as a society, to the position which they were originally created to maintain; and since order is an evident element in the constitution of Christianity, that portion of order which it finds yet remaining in the world may be justly employed conjointly with its own powers in its propagation. In the Jewish economy the religious and civil authorities were inseparably intertwined—the administrations of each were different, but their sanctions were the same: and hence we may conclude, that there is no natural incongruity between the laws of civil society and the system of grace. In its first days, it is true, Christianity had to struggle into existence, not only without the aid of the secular arm, but in direct opposition to its influence. The Jewish authorities mistook it for a scheme to establish an earthly dominion; and the heathen foresaw in it the extirpation of those old superstitions, through the influence of which they had alone governed the hearts of the people, and

which they foolishly imagined were essential to the maintenance of law and order.²⁰ But the ministers of the Gospel had an ally in this extremity, more potent than the opposition, nay even the assistance, of the civil power. The extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit enabled them to diffuse the everlasting truths of the Gospel through the inert mass of the people, and to endure or to disarm the persecution of their rulers; till the early Fathers soon

20 " It has been remarked that the treatment of the primitive Christians formed a solitary exception to that system of universal toleration, which regulated the conduct of the Roman government towards the professors of other religions. a Gibbon appears to have assigned the true reason of this deviation from its usual policy, when he observes that while all other people professed a national religion, the Christians formed a sect. The Ægyptian, though he deemed it his duty to worship the same birds and reptiles to which his ancestors had paid adoration, made no attempt to induce the inhabitants of other countries to adopt his deities. In his estimation the different superstitions of the heathen world were not so much at variance that they could not exist together. respected the faith of others, while he preferred his own. But Christianity was from its very nature a proselyting religion. convert not only abandoned the faith of his ancestors, and thereby committed an unpardonable offence in the eyes of a Gentile, but also claimed to himself the exclusive possession of the truth, and denounced as criminal every other mode of worship. When we consider this striking distinction between the character of Christianity, and of every other form of religion then existing, we shall feel less surprise that it was regarded by the ruling powers with pecu-

a Chap. xvi. p. 523. Ed. 4to.

boldly remind the Roman authorities that the great majority of the people either openly or in secret hold the faith of Christ crucified, so that if there be, of a truth, danger in their creed, it is the part of a wise ruler rather to avert than to provoke it.²¹ Experience soon taught them that there was no

liar feelings of jealousy and dislike, or that it was excepted from the general system of toleration. ^b In vain did Tertullian insist upon the right of private judgment in matters of faith; in vain expose the strange inconsistency of tolerating the absurd superstitions of Ægypt, and at the same time persecuting the professors of a religion, which inculcated the worship of one, pure, spiritual, omniscient, omnipotent God,—a God in every respect worthy to receive the adorations of intelligent beings. By thus asserting that the God of the Christians was the only true God, he unavoidably destroyed the effect of his appeal to the understanding, the justice, and the humanity of the Roman governors."—Bp. of Bristol's Ecclesiastical History, pp. 125, 126.

²¹ "Tertullian c bears explicit testimony to the wide diffusion of Christianity in his day. To refute the charges of disloyalty and disaffection to the Emperors which had been brought against the Christians, he thus appeals to the patience with which they bore the injuries and cruclties inflicted on them. ^d Not, he says, that we are destitute of the means of resistance, if our Christian principles allowed us to resort to them. Though we date our existence only from yesterday, we have filled every part of your empire; we are to be found in your cities, your islands, your camps, your palaces,

b cc. 24, 28, ad Scap. c. 2.

c Obsessam vociferantur civitatem; in agris, in castellis, in insulis Christianos: omnem sexum, ætatem, conditionem, etiam dignitatem transgredi ad hoc nomen quasi detrimento mærent. Apology, c. 1.

d Quid tamen de tam conspiratis unquam denotâstis, &c.? Apology, c. 37.

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danger—that submission to the *civil* authority of the powers that be, even though that power might be heathen—was an essential article of the Christian creed; and that it was therefore their wisest policy

your forum.....So great are our numbers, that we might successfully contend with you in open warfare; but were we only to withdraw ourselves from you, and to remove by common consent to some remote corner of the globe, our mere secession would be sufficient to accomplish your destruction, and to avenge our cause. You would be left without subjects to govern, and would tremble at the solitude and silence around you—at the awful stillness of a dead world.' In another place Tertullian tells 'Scapula, the Proconsul of Africa, that if the persecution against the Christians were persisted in, the effect would be to decimate the inhabitants of Carthage. 'He elsewhere speaks also of the immense revenue which might be collected, if each Christian was allowed to purchase the free exercise of his religion for a sum of money."—Bishop Kaye's Tertullian, pp. 91, 92.

So also St. Chrysostom: "Think," says he, "what it is in a short time to have filled the whole world with so many churches, to have converted so many nations, to persuade people to lay aside their inherited practices, pluck up their rooted customs, chase away as dust the tyranny of pleasure, the might of malice, disperse like smoke heathen altars, shrines, images, mysteries, polluted

e Ad Scapulam, c. 4. In c. 2. speaking of the Christians, he says, quum tanta hominum multitudo, pars pene major civitatis cujusque, in silentio et modestià agimus.

f Tanta quotidie ærario augendo prospiciuntur remedia censuum, vectigalium, collationum, stipendiorum: nec unquam usque adhuc ex Christianis tale aliquid prospectum est, sub aliquam redemptionem capitis et sectæ redigendis, quum tantæ multitudinis nemini ignotæ fructus ingens meti possit. De Fugå in Persecutione, c. 12.

not to discourage a religion which (in the eyes of those to whom all creeds were alike) had the recommendation of uniting all its members together "in the bond of peace." But it could not be expected that Christianity should be directly fostered by the state, till the rulers themselves had actually embraced the faith. Men may, for politic reasons, tolerate a creed towards which they are personally indifferent; but they cannot be expected to afford it their express patronage unless they believe it to be true, still less if they believe it to be false. Even a heathen prince had too much honesty of heart, to hold himself justified in establishing the religion of the majority, independent of any consideration of its truth. idolatrous Ahab might thus have defended against Elijah his establishment of the worship of Baal, on the ground that the mass of the people had become Baal's servants, while the Lord's worshippers were reduced to "seven thousand in Israel."

But the rulers themselves soon embraced the Christian faith; and, naturally anxious to extend feasts and unclean incense, and raise altars" (Christian altars) "everywhere, in the empire of the Romans, the Persians, Scythians, Moors, Indians, yea, even beyond our world. For the British, which lie beyond this sea, and are in the very ocean, have felt the power of the word; for there also have churches and altars been set up."—Chrys. Orat. quod Xtus. Deus. t. i. p. 575. Ed. Ben.

to others that knowledge which they justly deemed to be all-important, they aided, by state-honours and pecuniary endowments, the ministers of the Gospel in the task of spreading and maintaining a knowledge of Christianity among their subjects. It has been sometimes made a doubt whether these are truly aids, and whether the use of them does not betray a distrust in the unassisted power of the gospel, and tend to secularize and degrade its spiritual character. But if the view of the gospel, which has gradually developed itself throughout the course of our present inquiries, pe in any respect founded in truth, Christianity, instead of being in direct hostility, or altogether separated from civil institutions, partakes itself of the character of such an institution as to its outward form, order, and discipline; and, springing from holier principles, and, leading to higher results than earthly systems of government, harmonizes with them in construction, and gives to them, when in union with them, stronger sanctions, and more beneficial uses, than of themselves they can ever possess or accomplish. Hence the alliance, as it has been called, between Church and State, appears not only to be justifiable, but to have been from the first designed by Him who is the original author of both: having been positively enjoined by him in one instance, and appearing desirable in all,

by the common ends which they have to answer, and the similarity of principles on which they are evidently constructed.²² They are, it must not be forgotten, originally independent of each other. Sovereign power was in the world, and, though

22 True as this is of the Church Catholic, it cannot be pronounced with equal confidence of any heretical separation from, or corrupted branch of it; and this their incompatibility with legitimate forms of government which are acknowledged to be of God, may be adduced as no weak argument of their being in error. Neither Popery nor Independence has ever yet been found to be a safe or salutary ally for a free and well-governed state. It has been well observed by the late learned Archbishop Magee, in one of his excellent Charges, that "A system which either rejects the idea of a fixed creed, or contains within it a principle of indefinite variation, cannot be adopted without incurring the risk of adopting what it might become the duty of the state to discard, and thus laying the foundation of religious conflict and general confusion. The Scripture itself, although it comprises all truth necessary to salvation, yet does not comprise it in the form of one connected scheme, all whose lines and boundaries are plainly presented to the view. The rays of divine light are left to be collected by the honest industry of man; and the highest praise was bestowed by the inspired teacher of Christianity on those who diligently searched the Scripture to discover what was true. Those, then, who, on the one hand, affect to refer to Scripture itself, as their only creed, and those who, on the other, pretend to additional lights through the medium of tradition, are alike open to the objection of an unsettled form of faith; and the Independent and the Romanist are, on this ground, equally unfitted to be the spiritual associate of the enlightened Christian ruler, who would provide for the people a fixed religious code,

heathen, approved of God, long before the days of Christianity; and Christ commanded his disciples to submit to the powers that might happen to be, not merely on prudential but on religious grounds: the Church, therefore, has no direct authority over the State; which has a natural claim on the allegiance of the human heart, independent of religious sanctions. But, neither, on the other hand, has

applicable to the purpose of general instruction, and of whose conformity with the revealed truth of God, he might, at all times, satisfactorily assure himself, by a comparison with his sacred word."

Nothing places the wisdom, foresight, and admirable discretion of the Fathers of our reformed Church in a clearer point of view, than the sound notions which they entertained as to the religious and civil benefits arising from the alliance between Church and State, and the fidelity with which they clung to the latter, notwithstanding their own personally bitter experience of the trials to which such an alliance but too frequently exposed them. Popery might trample on civil power, and Non-conformity might despise or usurp it; but the Church of England has always maintained that the spiritual and temporal authorities should go hand in hand, in mutual subjection and mutual love, like twin daughters of a heavenly Parent. This is the pious and patriotic language of good old Dr. Jackson on this subject; (and herein he spoke but the language of all his learned brethren of that period)-"Thrice happy that land and state where civil policy and spiritual wisdom, grave experience, and profound learning, in whose right commixture consists the perfect temperature of every Christian state, do rightly symbolize. These, where they mutually clasp in their extremes, without intermeddling in the essence of each other's profession, are like the side-posts or arches in the

the State any authority over the Church, in its spiritual capacity. The Church does not owe its origin to, or depend for its existence upon, any human power: it came directly from God himself, through his only Son, Jesus Christ: he is the only Lord to whose authority we stoop, in our capacity as Christians. Nor does its existence rest on any human strength, but solely on the Divine aid. God has directed his Church to rely upon no outward circumstance, or earthly arm, but entirely on the Holy Spirit: He is the comforter and guardian

Lord's house; and the awful respect of Christ Jesus, the judge of both, and that dreadful day continually sounding in their ears by the voice of God's faithful and sincere ministers, would be as the binding-stone, or coupling, to fasten them surely in the joining. But whilst these, each jealous of other, start asunder, that breach is made whereat the enemies of Church and State hope for speedy entrance, to the utter ruin of both."—Repert. Theol. book ii. sect. l. c. 31.

Dr. Priestley, on the other hand, speaks the language of his own sect, and of an innumerable tribe of cognate schismatics, in the following very intelligible passage: "Perhaps we must wait for the fall of the civil powers before this most unnatural alliance (between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world) be broken. Calamitous, no doubt, will that time be; but what convulsion in the political world ought to be a subject of lamentation, if it be attended with so desirable an event?"—Hist. of Corruptions, &c. vol. ii. p. 489. Does not the history of Dissent, since Dr. Priestley's day, tend to shew that he was not singular in entertaining these atrocious sentiments?

of the Church, even unto the end of the world. So independent of each other are, naturally, the civil and spiritual authorities; and for some centuries they existed apart,—the State not recognizing or assisting, but, on the contrary, often persecuting the Church of Christ.²³ But when, by the rapid progress of the Gospel it had come to pass, that the individuals in whose hands was the power of the State had themselves become Christians, it was

²³ The above passage has been substantially adopted from the following excellent statement of the same point in Mr. PALMER'S Treatise on the Church of Christ: "The church was originally and essentially independent of the state. For it was not founded by any human power, but by the Son of God, and by his apostles under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. All that is essential to this spiritual society was of DIVINE institution. The doctrines which were to be believed, the duties to be performed, the system and mode of association, its ministry, and rites, were all dictated by God himself, by whose will and commandment this divine religion was to be propagated amongst all nations, as the way by which men should attain his favour. The church therefore was not originated by the state; on the contrary it was propagated for several centuries in opposition to the will of the temporal government, which in its ignorance attempted to suppress a religion calculated to confer the highest blessings on humanity. It is certain however, that the church even while in a state of persecution, possessed every essential characteristic of the true church. Its divine doctrine and discipline were sustained, heretics and schismatics were expelled, councils were held, offences against the divine law judged. the succession of its legitimate pastors preserved, and the promise of Christ, "Lo, I am with you always," verified.—Vol. ii. p. 316.

natural that they should now exercise that power for the furtherance of those doctrines which they had embraced. They could not, as honest men, act one part in a private and another in a public capacity; but necessarily encouraged, with such additional influence as their official authority afforded them, the spread of those doctrines among their subjects which they themselves believed to be essential to their future salvation. The Church could not but embrace such assistance with all thankfulness, as an instrument raised up by the evident finger of God for the furtherance of her religious objects: and hence the alliance between Church and State: the Church, by her spiritual influence, disseminating those sound principles and just laws of morals which are essential to the public welfare, and even the temporal happiness and prosperity, of the people; and the State, by its countenance and protection, assisting the Church in the prosecution of all those means which she holds to be indispensable for the accomplishment of her own holy purposes. These are the original terms of the compact, which neither party has a right to break. It was for their mutual benefit, without prejudice to their separate ends, that they were, from the first, associated.

Now, since the great object which the Church has to answer, is to discharge the duty expressed

in the text—"Go ye forth into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"—i. e. to evangelize the world,—the assistance which she has a right to expect from the State must have either a direct or remote reference to the furtherance of this end within the sphere of its jurisdiction. More than this the Church cannot demand; less than this she cannot be satisfied with;—any terms or regulations which would fetter the Church in the discharge of this her paramount office cannot be complied with, on her part, towards the State, without a sacrifice of some portion of that primary duty which she owes to God. Thus, for religious purposes, she requires free access to all her people, through every stage of their existence. Their connexion with the Church, according to her doctrine, is almost coeval with their entrance into the world. She admits them into her fold in the earliest days of infancy, and watches over and directs their footsteps till they pass, through the grave and gate of death, into the immediate presence of the great Shepherd of their souls. She mingles her instruction, and interposes her heavenly counsels, with every secular act of their lives. She drops the balm of religion into their earthly cup of bitterness-she pours the sobering draught of holy fear into the intoxicating bowl of worldly enjoyment. In childhood, she labours to

join heavenly wisdom with earthly knowledge; in manhood, she teaches that Duty is to be built on Faith, and human strength to be made perfect in the strength of God's holy Spirit; in age, she consoles her son by pointing to another and more enduring inheritance; nor does she ever leave or desert him, till she has consoled him on his death-bed with her divine offices, and pronounced her last solemn benediction over his grave. Thus inseparable is the connexion of the Church with her children; and any thing which could have a tendency to disjoin that union must be watched by her with the most jealous care. So long as the State assists her in the duty of instructing her adult, or educating her young members, she receives the boon with thankfulness and gratitude. Any remissness on its part, as to the amount of aid thus rendered, however much she might regret the defect, she would consider but as a more earnest call upon herself to greater and more zealous exertions. But any attempt on the part of the State to impede or to counteract her labours -any encouragement, to her prejudice and injury, of an adverse creed, or of any system of education tending to separate her flock from her constant religious superintendence—any such proceeding, calculated to obstruct her progress in the discharge of her great duty of evangelizing mankind, she

would consider as a breach of the first terms of alliance between herself and the State, and would resist such impediment to her labours by every legitimate means in her power.24 She knows that her main duty is, at all hazards, to preach the gospel. That she is not to wait till mankind are willing to receive it, or willing to co-operate with her in spreading it—for had its first apostles done so, the whole world would have been still in darkness. If "the powers that be" will aid her in the work, she will consider them, so far, as "ministers of God to her for good." But if not-if they will oppose rather than assist the servants of the Lord her duty is clear, and not to be shrunk from without guilt. She must go forth, as the disciples did of old, as sheep among wolves—she must go forth,

24 This is not the place to enter more fully than has been done incidentally in the text, upon the great question of National Education, on which the public mind is, at this moment, so strongly and so justly excited. The author devoutly prays that the great scheme of Diocesan Education, on a plan commensurate with the extent, and in harmony with the doctrine and discipline as well as the Ecclesiastical divisions, of the National Church, may be carried into efficient operation in accordance with the pious and almost primitive zeal with which it has been commenced; and then the Church will be enabled to strike its roots deep in the hearts of her rising generation, instead of being compelled, as she has been of late, (perhaps for her own sins!) to scatter her seeds upon the hard and uncultivated soil of a reluctant population!

as they did, in faith and hope, without arms of defence or provision for the way: and let her not fear, that to her, as to them, will strength be given from on High; that men will once more see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven; and that the kingdoms of the world will thus become—as we know from the sure word of prophecy they shall at last become—"the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

These, then, appear to be the means provided for spreading a knowledge of the Gospel among mankind:-an order of men, on whom the duty of preaching it is expressly enjoined;—a written word, dictated or superintended by the Holy Ghost, which forms their credentials, their guide, and one of their most efficient instruments in making the gospel known and obeyed among men;—the general promise of the Holy Spirit, as assisting their labours to the end of time; -and the cooperation of the civil authorities of the world, when the powers of the state become Christianized, and rulers learn that they owe a duty to God as well as a duty to man. When all these concur in the promotion of God's glory, we may hope that the time is approaching when the prophetic promise of Jeremiah shall be fulfilled—"They shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man

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his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me from the least to the greatest."²⁴

The end of our labours is now come; and we have completed our attempt to trace the structure and frame-work of the outward and visible Church of Christ from its base to its summit. We have considered, in turn, and in their natural order, the following momentous questions: we commenced with the foundation,—the authority and the inspiration of Scripture; these have brought us to the Catholic doctrines of the Church, as expressed in the three Creeds; from thence we were led to an inquiry into the use of Articles of Religion; the utility of Rituals and Liturgies next claimed our attention; and lastly, we have examined into the authority which the Church possesses within itself of checking error, and of propagating the truth. On all these fundamental questions we have attempted to arrive at the leading idea; being convinced that no labour can be in vain, which shall bring the generous youth around me to perceive, that there is system in the constitution of their Church, as well as in the construction of the universe; and that to arrive at first laws, whether in the physical, moral, or religious world, is the best starting point from which to commence their onward progress. Having once rightly ascertained

²⁴ Jer. xxxi. 34. and Heb. viii. 11.

the first elementary principles of the gospel revelation, they may pursue them to their utmost results without fear of material error. For truth, in all sciences, like gold in expansion, can never be so attenuated as to lose its original character—it is still an emanation from the mind and will of its Eternal Author. God's Church, like his Universe, is a perfect system; and both are so constructed, that while the wayfaring man is not deprived, by his ignorance, of the substantial benefits which they bestow, he who studies them most diligently is disclosing constantly a new and daily illustration of the great truth, that the wisdom of God is as infinite as his mercy!

END OF LECTURE VIII.

THE DUTY

ОF

LITURGICAL PREACHING

STATED AND ENFORCED.

** It has been thought proper to append the following Sermon to these Lectures, for reasons which will be found stated in the Preface.

THE DUTY

OF

LITURGICAL PREACHING

STATED AND ENFORCED.

1 Corinthians iii., 4, 5.

For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but Ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

OF Apollos, the minister here brought into a momentary comparison with the Apostle to the Gentiles, we learn but little from the Scriptures, or elsewhere. He is first mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, where we are told of him, that he was "born at Alexandria," and was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures." Having been compelled, from the locality of his birth, to overcome the characteristic dislike of the Jew to learn a foreign language, and brought into daily collision with the philosophical and reasoning Greeks of that central city, he necessarily became a logician, (as the word which we translate "eloquent," seems

more properly to imply,) and, possibly from his office of converting Greeks to the Jewish faith, became mighty, also, in the Scriptures, -well versed in the established interpretations of the various prophecies, types, and ordinances of the Mosaic Law. This man, thus previously prepared for the work of an Evangelist, having first learned "the baptism of John," and then "the way of God more perfectly' from Aquila and Priscilla, was sent by the Church to Corinth, to carry on the work which Paul had been prosecuting, for nearly two years, in that important city. There, we are told, his labours in edifying that Church of which St. Paul had already laid the foundation were abundantly successful. "He helped them much which had believed through grace: for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ."2 The tone of his preaching at Corinth, then, we may reasonably infer, was in some degree dissimilar from that of St. Paul. He had a different object in view, and he effected it by different means. The basis of the Church had been already laid in the full establishment of the great doctrine of the Atonement; and probably, though it is not recorded, through the instrumentality of miracles. St. Paul thus describes the system which he pursued among

² Acts xviii. 27, 28:

them:-"I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified: and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."3 Apollos, on the other hand, had, upon this foundation, thus firmly laid by "a wise master-builder," to erect such a superstructure as so solid a ground-work required, -that "the man of God," already rooted and grounded in love, "might be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." The course of his teaching, therefore, was, no doubt, in some degree more learned and argumentative, than the plain and elementary instruction of St. Paul. He had to contend with Jews who were well versed in the knowledge of their own Scriptures, and in the refinements and subtilties of their Rabbinical schools; and, with their own weapons, and in their own mode of argument, he had to encounter and confute his adversaries.

It is certain, however, from St. Paul's first Epistle to the Church at Corinth, that this neces-

³ 1 Cor. ii. 2, 4. The elementary and progressive system adopted by St. Paul towards the Corinthians (a fact too often forgotten in the *indiscriminate* teaching of our own day) is further shewn by the Apostle's assertion in ch. iii. v. 2. "I have fed you with *milk*, and not with *meat*: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet *now* are ye able."

sary difference between his preaching and that of Apollos was attended with some consequences unfavourable to the progress of the Gospel. true reason of this difference it would appear that many members of that Church had not perceived; but had erroneously conjectured that there was some degree of discordance in the views which these two great Teachers had taken of the Gospel of Christ: on this false supposition they had divided themselves into parties, siding with the one or with the other of the chief propagators of Christianity according as their supposed views of the Gospel happened to be in harmony, or otherwise, with their This spirit of contention St. Paul proceeds at length, and with his wonted eloquence and energy, to expose and allay; and especially by shewing, that there was no ground whatever for the dangerous notion which they had so fatally imbibed, and that the Gospel was but one, whether it were Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas who preached it; "We have received," says he, "not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."4

I have, on this oceasion, laid these well-known 4 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13.

circumstances in Scripture History before you, because of the natural and obvious reflection which springs out of them; which reflection I intend to make the foundation of my present Discourse. is simply this: If the very nature of Preaching be such that it is found to produce discordant views and erroneous impressions, even when applied as it was "in old time," when "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," what may justly be expected to be its results when used by men who have no such bond of unity in their sentiments and language?—if such were its effects when employed by those who "had perfect knowledge of all things from the very first," and when the fault and ground of mistake were invariably in the hearer, and never in the preacher of the Gospel,-what consequences may be fairly looked for, when ignorance and error in the teacher operate upon the very same failings in those who hear?—Surely such as we see around us when we look abroad on the Christian world! We seem to possess, in the imperfection and uncertainty of preaching alone, a fact which will at once account for most of the minor flaws and blemishes which disfigure the temple of our Church—such rents as descend not to the foundation. It is asserted by St. Paul, and every faithful minister of the Gospel accords with the declaration, that "other foundation can no man lay than that

is laid, which is Jesus Christ." But then comes the superstructure, in which every one holds himself in a great degree at liberty to use his own materials, or at least to arrange them according to his own judgment; he builds "upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones,-wood, hay, stubble," after the measure of his own ability; and here, accordingly, the signs of division and disorder begin. If, then, the "Liberty of Prophecying" be an instrument so powerful for good or for evil, it ought to be employed with proportionate care and judgment; when we range over so wide a field, the landmarks by which we direct our course should be distinct, and judiciously placed. In our own Church little seems to have been done, by authority, to regulate the preaching of her Ministers; and much is therefore left to their individual judgment and discretion. It may have been right that on this subject the voice of authority should say little, but it is on that very ground indispensable that judgment and discretion should do the more. It seems to be an unfortunate circumstance that the young Minister of the Gospel should enter upon his task without any distinct notions respecting its precise nature: while the impression, which he too often imbibes, of the boundless range of his preaching, is often seen to produce an equally injurious effect on two opposite classes of men-the bold, and the timid. The former, feeling

himself unfettered in his course, and bound only by the fundamental doctrines of Scripture and of his Church, holds himself perfectly free to convey those doctrines under any form to his hearers-to introduce them in any order, and enforce with any arguments, which may seem to him calculated to produce the desired effect. The result of this system is necessarily distortion. Nothing which is not true may be stated, and yet the true impression may not be produced. The harmony which results from a due proportion and collocation of parts may be wanting,-the gold of the scripture and the hay and stubble of his own arguments have no common principle of cohesion: and the effect on the hearer's mind, however permanent and however powerful, is not that which a candid and comprehensive view of the whole Gospel is calculated to produce. This error St. Paul seems to have had especially in his mind, when he so emphatically addressed the Corinthians:- "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing."5

While such appears to be the almost unavoidable effect of the supposed license of preaching on the mind and practice of the bold and enthusiastic, a contrary, and perhaps equally injurious one, will necessarily be produced on the more timid and

reserved. The open space before his view, which is to the other an incitement to an excursive range over its surface, operates on his mind as a discouragement and a hinderance. He feels acutely the awfulness of his situation; the utmost importance of every word that he may utter—the extensive, the unknown consequences of every doctrine that he may propound, and the obliquity which that doctrine may imperceptibly receive from the channel through which it is conveyed, press painfully upon his mind; he shrinks from the responsibility and hazard of throwing his own views confidently into his teaching; he has recourse, too systematically, to the labours of others of established reputation; and thus sacrifices one of the most efficient instruments of instruction—unity of design, and the pervading influence of the same mind.

If such, then, be the almost necessary evils to which the notion of the unlimited license of preaching seems directly to lead, the question becomes an important, nay a vital one,—whether the notion itself be not subject to some legitimate restrictions. Are there not, in truth, certain clear and distinct limits, within which every faithful Minister of the Church will hold himself to be restrained, in his addresses to the people committed to his charge?

The fundamental doctrine of our Church, and primary basis of our preaching, is this—that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary for salvation."6 But this fundamental principle is not the distinguishing tenet of any individual Church-it is that of Protestantism at large; and is found to be consistent with all the various opinions that divide and distract the whole Christian world. The Minister of a particular Church is necessarily confined within a narrower boundary; and our own limit seems to be sufficiently indicated in that part of our Ordination vow, wherein we pledge ourselves, "by the help of the Lord, to give our faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and Realm hath received the same." We seem, in this solemn pledge, to have entered into an engagement, which virtually confines the range of our preaching within the bounds of our Liturgy, that is, those admirable formularies through which our Church has expressed her sentiments on every important point of religious faith and practice. We have, indeed, been blessed with "wise master-

⁶ Articles of Religion. Art. vi. ⁷ Ordination Service.

builders" in former days, who out of the precious mines of the Scriptures have, with wonderful skill and labour, wrought out the materials from which the glorious temple of our Apostolical Church has been erected; they have constructed that temple in perfect symmetry with the model of it, which is shadowed forth in the word of God; and they have committed to us, their successors, the Ministers of the Church, the charge of preserving that temple inviolate, and of erecting or re-edifying, in that portion of the kingdom of Christ assigned to us, as it were, a minor tabernacle, in strict harmony and keeping with the fashion of its great prototype. So far as the Church has builded, it is the part of an unwise, nay, of an unfaithful builder, to attempt again to lay the foundation; and whenever, from the lapse of time, or the change of circumstances, the individual "workman" may find it requisite, in the course of his instruction, to add somewhat (by way of explication) to the venerable structure, it is his bounden duty to make that addition in a reverent spirit, and with the least possible injury to the original design. Guided then, by this principle, the faithful Minister of the Church will feel at once that the scope and object of his preaching are limited by definite and evident bounds; that his labours are to be subservient and auxiliary to the task which the Church, in her Liturgy, has herself all but completed. Should he, for example,

find it to be his duty to enforce on his congregation the observance of the Christian Sacraments,various as are the lights in which they may be placed, and numerous as are the arguments on which they may be made to rest, he will hold himself bound, as a Churchman addressing Churchmen, to place them in those lights, and enforce them with those arguments which the Church herself has done, in the Services with which she has respectively provided them. Again; perceiving, as he does, that Holy Scripture, the basis of all preaching, is by the Church produced before his congregation, not in the mass and without discrimination, but systematically and in due order; that while no part of the New Testament, nor any important part of the Old, is withheld from them, some portions are more especially pressed upon their attention, selected with admirable judgment. and either directly or more remotely throwing light upon each other;—he will see in this, as it were, an outline delineated, by which the Church, in making preaching concurrent with this reading of the Scriptures, expects that the expounder's course shall be directed and bounded. And so, throughout all his ministrations, whether public or private, it will be his study to render the tone and spirit of them as much as possible in harmony with the method and language of his Church; and never to permit himself or his hearers to forget, that her formularies and offices are the best expositors of God's word,—the criterion and bond of our society,—and a supply of wholesome and daily food, by which the spiritual wants of all its members are continually and abundantly satisfied.⁸

⁸ Since the first edition of this Sermon was published, the author has been gratified to find the views above expressed confirmed by Bp. Mant, in his excellent little work, entitled "The Clergyman's Obligations considered,"—a volume which ought to be in the hands of every young clergyman. "These are things, which should never be absent from a clergyman's mind, as falling within the constant scope of his preaching. But allusion was made to his obligation to 'teach his people the doctrine and sacraments and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and Realm hath received the same.' Now the preaching of these things again has the same ultimate view, as that which has just been noticed; namely, the establishment of the hearers in Christian duty and Christian practice: and to these it should be made subservient. Considered distinctly, however, they supply topics which require a clergyman's attention.

"Hence it is his duty to 'teach the doctrine of Christ, as received by the Church,' of which he is a minister: and therein to explain and justify the Creeds, and shew how they 'ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture;' to enlarge upon the Catechism, in some such manner as that prescribed by the 12th Irish Canon, which ordains, that the heads of the Catechism being divided into so many parts as there are Sundays in the year, shall be explained to the people in every parish church,' and as hath been exemplified so satisfactorily and admirably by Archbishop Secker in his Lectures; and to 'explicate to the people,' as Jeremy Taylor advises, 'the mysteries of the great festivals, as

If, then, it be true,—as it would assuredly seem to be,—that this system, of what may be styled *Liturgical Preaching*, is binding upon every Minister of our Church, is implied in his Ordination

of Christmas, Easter, Ascension-day, Whitsunday, Trinity Sunday, the Annunciation of the blessed Virgin Mary; because these feasts containing in them the great fundamentals of our faith, will with most advantage convey the mysteries to the people, and fix them in their memories, by the solemnity and circumstances of the day.'b

"Hence again it is his duty to 'teach his people the Sacraments of Christ, as the Church receives them:' to point out their general necessity to salvation, their nature, their signification, and the grace and benefits that they convey: especially to make known and enforce those admonitions, which the Church in her Rubricks directs him to address frequently to his people concerning the administration of Baptism; and to press upon their minds and consciences the exhortations concerning the Lord's Supper which the Church has provided and directs to be delivered, that so he may induce them to come and be 'received as worthy partakers of that holy table,' and may 'bring to a better mind' those who are negligent about coming.

"Hence, lastly, it is his duty to 'teach his people the discipline of Christ, as received by the Church;" to instruct them in the nature and excellence of our form of Church government, under the ministry of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, derived as it is from the apostles' times, and modelled on the platform of the primitive Church; in the qualifications requisite to constitute a minister of the word and sacraments, so that they may form a just estimate of their happiness as enjoying the ministry of an apostolical and duly-constituted priesthood; and in the excellence

b "Rules and Advices, &c." See Clergyman's Instructor, p. 107.

vow, and provided for in the arrangement of the Sunday Services; our next consideration is, the advantages which will arise (for advantages always

of the Book of Common Prayer, according to which the functions of their ministers are to be discharged, and in the reasons, the meaning, and the uses of its several parts: especially under this head it is his duty to teach them the different offices which belong to them in the public services of the Church; and to press upon them their obligations, to maintain an early, punctual, and constant, a reasonable and attentive, a decent and devout participation in the services, to observe the postures which become them in the different parts of the service, and to unite in the several portions allotted to them, vocally as well as mentally, in compliance with the express injunctions of the Church. It may be here added by the way, that the various selections from holy Scripture, appointed for the proper Lessons and for the Epistle and Gospel of the day, as they are very convenient guides to the preacher in his choice of subjects when not engaged in a continued course of systematic instruction, so may they be recommended for his guidance, as coinciding with, and calculated to render more edifying, the provisions of the Church, and as testifying respect for her authority: at the same time they will naturally lead him to a successive consideration of the principal contents of the sacred volume; such as the most prominent events and characters in the Patriarchal and Israelitish histories; the Mosaical law, its nature, its uses, and its imperfections; the awful denunciations of the prophets on the sinfulness of the chosen people, and their anticipations of righteousness, peace, and glory under the promised Messiah; the life and ministry, the parables, discourses, and miracles, of our Lord; and the acts, sufferings, and writings of his apostles for the establishment and edification of the infant Church.

do arise out of a faithful discharge of our duty) from adhering, in a liberal spirit, to the system thus strongly recommended to us.

The first, though perhaps not the most obvious advantage, is the *variety* which such a mode of instruction gives to the topics of the preacher.

Limiting us, as it may appear to do, within certain bounds, it at the same time extends and establishes our freedom through a wider space than we should otherwise have ventured, or have been able, to occupy; for, without extraneous aids, (I speak here of human means,) the powers of the most gifted individual are but few and feeble. The flights of the most buoyant imagination, when unsupported by artificial assistances, are confined within narrow limits; the accumulations of knowledge, even in the most amply furnished mind, are soon exhausted. Hence follow reiteration and repetition. The demand for water from a cistern limited in its capacity, at last drains it to the dregs. And, confined as is naturally the scope of our powers, it is often rendered more so by an almost unavoidable weakness. Any subject, that

"All these things should, in the course of his ministry, be subjects of a clergyman's preaching, because all these things are conducive to Christian faith and holiness, and they are also requisite to give his people proper notions of the character and the value of the Church, of which they are members."—Bishop Mant's Clergyman's Obligations considered, p. 192.

has been long present to the thoughts, is wont gradually to assume an undue importance in our estimation—an importance not according to its intrinsic value, but according to the degree of attention which we have paid it. Hence it is that some doctrines and some precepts of the Gospel at times acquire in our minds a preponderance over the rest, and so come to be dwelt upon with an emphasis and a frequency which we should be unable to justify on any rational ground of argument, or by the analogy of Scripture. Nothing, indeed, is more surprising than the infinite variety which pervades the teaching of our Lord and his Apostles. Even when the subject is the same, the illustration is different; and things new and old are brought out of the householder's treasury in an inexhaustible abundance. This variety it is doubtless our duty to imitate; and a faithful adherence to the system of teaching which our Church has marked out for us, is one of the best securities of our doing so. In her successive services will constantly be discovered topics which elevate the imagination, and, through that, awaken the feelings and instruct the heart. All the knowledge, too, of the preacher will be exercised, and all his industry required, if he honestly and fairly encounter every difficulty which these services press upon his notice; and diligently endeavour,-as

becomes one who must declare all the counsel of God,—so to expound even the dark sayings of Scripture, that, if not wholly intelligible, they may yet be a source of wholesome edification to his hearers. In this way, moreover, all undue attention to any particular doctrine or precept of scripture will be entirely precluded. Our appointed Services range through the whole extent of the Gospel with wonderful judgment and discrimination; the analogy of Scripture is strictly followed throughout; nothing is redundant - nothing is omitted; so that, in pursuing this safe course, the enthusiastic is restrained, the timid excited and encouraged; and he who has followed it discovers that he has been trusting to no false guide, but to one who has conducted his steps safely through all the intricacies of Scripture, without ever avoiding a path because it was difficult, or repeating one by mistake!

The second advantage, which I would especially dwell upon, is this—that the Preacher will hence derive from the Liturgy all the assistance which it is so well calculated to afford him in his addresses to his congregation.

The Dissenter from our Church has no such stay, as we possess, on which to rest his expositions of God's word. He necessarily speaks, not as one having the authority of a formulary to support his

opinions, but, in a great measure, as an individual propounding his own views of Scripture to his hearers; which they accordingly receive with such qualifications as their own private notions, or his supposed ability, may suggest. But the Minister of our Church is in no small degree exempt from this scrutiny and personal responsibility. He has the powerful aid of a Liturgy, which, by universal consent, approaches nearer in language and spirit to that Divine Word on which it is modelled, than any other human composition; and which possesses the love and admiration of his hearers. By this he can secure their approbation—by this they will try his doctrine. So long as his labours

9 This is said not as a reproach to the Sectary, but as a ground of legitimate triumph to ourselves. Many of the wisest among dissenters have regretted the want of some authorized standard for their opinions, and have attributed the stability of the Church, in a great degree, to her possessing one.

¹⁰ While this Sermon was passing through the press the Anthor met with the following extract from the life of the Rev. Edward D. Griffin, a Clergyman of the Episcopal Church in America, which, coming from such a quarter, may most appropriately be introduced in this place:—" In the use of prescribed forms he recognized, as he often said, the strongest bulwark against both error of doctrine and fanaticism of life; and whether he looked into the past history or present state of the Christian Church, he found abundant proof of the necessity of such safeguards. His own country was full of warning examples; and when, he saw the pathless ocean of error into which so many Churches had wandered for the want of such

are in harmony with the spirit which breathes through this our Church's safeguard and guide, so long will his teaching be understood, appreciated, and loved, by those who, equally with himself, have recourse to the same Scriptures for their doctrine, and to the same Prayer-book for its interpretation. Surely no preacher would willingly forego this advantage—at once a protection to himself—a conciliation of his audience, and the discharge of a bounden duty.

The last and most important benefit to which I would refer, is this; that such a mode of teaching gives object, and system, and life, to the whole course of our public ministrations. The Preacher has, here, not only a distinct end in view, but a clear and definite path prescribed by which that end may be attained. Considering himself as the impelling power which is to give motion and energy to that scheme of Christian edification which his Church has devised, he will permit no part of it to remain inert and unproductive for want of his exciting and superintending care. From the sincere milk of the word for those who are but babes in Christ, to the strong meat for those

a landmark, of such an abiding test by which to try the doctrines of the living preacher, he may be said to have clung to the Liturgy of the Church as to the pillar, or rather the anchor of Christendom."

who are of full age—from the Catechism for the young, to the Creeds for them of riper years-from the plainest facts of Scripture history, to the loftiest heights of Gospel doctrine-all will meet, not with a desultory, but a due attention. Whilst his hearers, more impressed with the weight of the instruction which he dispenses, than the manner in which it is conveyed, will habitually consider, not whether he speaks with the eloquence of Paul, or the argument of Apollos, but whether he is faithful in his views to the doctrines of Scripture, and the setting forth of that doctrine by the Church of which he is the accredited representative. educated in the bosom and the principles of our Apostolical Communion; perceiving its spirit to breathe throughout all the ministrations of their Pastor, and feeling experimentally the unspeakable benefits which spring from the Word of Truth rightly divided, and systematically enforced, they will not consider a transition from the Church to the Conventicle in so indifferent a light as modern laxity has brought it to be esteemed-it would be a rending asunder of ties too strong and endearing to be broken without a bitter struggle.11

¹¹ The Author has frequently been answered, by individuals of that large body of Christians who, nominally Churchmen, are in the habit of attending the Meeting-house,—when remonstrating with them on their inconsistency,—"I can really perceive no dif-

impressions produced by the highest efforts of eloquence and wisdom, when not guided by system in their operations, are often faint and transitory. The energy of the Preacher was the main cause of excitement in the hearer; and the flame, having nothing within to feed upon, passes away with the breath that had kindled it. But the teacher, however humble his individual powers, who brings constantly to his aid the eloquence, and wisdom, and piety of the founders of his Church, may reasonably look for a surer success, and a more permanent duration, for his labours. And, were this system of Liturgical Preaching a general principle, or rather, a general practice, among his brethren, he would derive from the reflection additional consolation for himself, and hope for his appointed charge. He would enjoy the assurance that, when he was taken from them, he would not leave them comfortless; that the shepherds of his church, wherever their fold may be, are of one heart and one soul; and therefore his flock, into whose care soever they may fall, will never be ference between the doctrine preached there, and that which I hear at Church." No doubt, this is mostly true; and so long as there is no difference, likewise, in the manner of stating that doctrine, the advantage of the similarity will be all on the side of dissent. The author must now add, with much gratification, that the above note, written in 1832, would not have been written, because circumstances would not have called for it, in 1839.

called upon to listen to the voice of a stranger; should it, therefore, be the Lord's will to take their "Master from their head to-day," he will feel that the same Mantle of Truth in which he has been clad, will descend to the Elisha who is to follow, that it will retain its divine influence, in his hands, as in those of its former owner,—and be by him employed, as before, to the benefit of the church,—the glory of God,—and the salvation of all those committed to his care!

And do thou, O Holy Spirit! by whose power alone all human means are blessed and sanctified -do thou so guide and direct our efforts in this and all our endeavours to promote the honour of God and the welfare of his people, that the kingdom of Christ may by our means enlarge its borders, and peace, unity, and holiness be its inheritance for ever!

THE END.

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